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Pañca-t,taya Sutta

The Discourse on the Five and the Three | M 102

or Pañc'āyatana Sutta The Discourse on the Five Bases

Theme: Speculations about survival, the afterlife and and nirvana

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006, 2012

1 Sutta highlights1.1 A SUTTA ON VIEWS

1.1.1 The Pañca-t,taya Sutta, “the discourse on the five and the three,” gives a survey of various views, dealing with survival, mystical meditation and spiritual liberation.¹ It is the only Majjhima discourse to present (in brief) the whole set of 62 grounds (vatthu) for wrong views described in full in the **Brahma,jāla Sutta** (D 1).² Although both the Pañca-t,taya Sutta and the Brahma,jāla Sutta deal with the same materials, they are not identical. A key difference is in their arrangement of the grounds or views. Their respective key terms also differ: in the former, it is the well known word “view” (*diṭṭhi*), while the latter uses “ground” (*vatthu*).

1.1.2 The Pañca-t,taya Sutta is about **views**. As I B Horner notes, in her Majjhima translation (M:H 3:15 n1), it should be studied along with the **Brahma,jāla Sutta** (D 1).³ Numerous suttas deal with particular views or sets of views current in the Buddha’s society, but only the Brahma,jāla Sutta and the Pañca-t,taya Sutta give a systematic survey of them.⁴

1.1.3 The Majjhima Commentary notes that the Pañca-t,taya Sutta mentions “**self-identity**” (*sakkāya*) [§§12.2+3], while the Brahma,jāla Sutta does not. It explains that this is because the Brahma,jāla Sutta is taught first (MA 4:25). If this statement is correct, then “it provides a valuable clue to the relative age of the two Discourses” (M:H 3:xi).

A rule of thumb is that a shorter text likely to be older, and likely to be expanded into a longer discourse, as often is the case in the Aṅguttara Nikāya.⁵ As such, the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, which is very much shorter than the **Brahma,jāla Sutta** (D 1), is probably older than the latter. However, as scholars have noted, in the **Pañca-t,taya Sutta**, the section on the views about the future [§§3-13] should have been placed *after* the views about the past [§§14-24] so that the Sutta reads more [2.6.1]. Then, the problem of the missing mention on the 5th view—that of nirvana here and now—would be resolved [§13].⁶

Scholars have also noted the possibility that originally there might have been an older version of the Pañca-t,taya Sutta that had only the “5 bases,” as the title **Pañc'āyatana Sutta** [1.2.1] (given in the Burm-

¹ M 2:228,8-238,6; M:Be 3:18,1-26,20; M:Se 14 3:27,1-40,20. Eng tr in *Further Discourses of the Buddha* (M:C 1927 2:131-136, very dated); *Middle Length Sayings* (M:H 1959 3:15-24, dated); *Treasury of the Buddha’s Word* (M:KB 1980 2:300-309); *Middle Length Discourses* (M:ÑB 2001, 3rd ed 2009:838-846); Thai tr in *Brah Sūtr lae’ Atthakathā* (Bangkok: Maha Makut Rajavidyalay) 3.1:38-51; German tr in K E Neumann, *Die Reden Gotamo* 1902: 24-34. See Skilling 1997:469-472 for more detailed refs esp Skt & Tib sources.

² D 1/1:12-46 @ SD 25. Chin tr: DĀ 21 @ T1.89c-94a, T1.21.266a-270c, and the Tib discourse (together with a Mongolian tr) in Weller 1934, tr of Dīrgha Āgama and Tib discourses can be found in Weller 1971, 1935. A quote of the teaching on views is found in Sāriputrābhidharma, T1548 @ T28.656b-661a, and a quote of the whole sutta in Śamathadeva’s comy on Abhidharma,kośa,bhāṣya, D (4094) mnong pa, ju 141b-153b or Q (5595) tu 162b-177b: see Analayo 2009o. Notably, while the treatment of DĀ 21 @ T1.89c24 speaks of “views,” 見, D 1/1:39,14 and the Tib version (Weller 1934:14,33) instead has “grounds (for views),” (*vatthu*, Tib *gzhi*), as in the Brahma,jāla S. See Analayo 2011:590 n23.

³ D 1/1:12-46 @ SD 25. See prec n.

⁴ See Jayatilleke 1963:275 f; Skilling 1997:474 f.

⁵ The shorter (**Chakka**) **Marāṇa,sati S 1** (A 6.19), eg, is expanded into the longer (**Aṭṭhaka**) **Marāṇa,sati S 1** (A 8.73). The shorter (**Chakka**) **Marāṇa,sati S 2** (A 6.20) is expanded into the longest (**Aṭṭhaka**) **Marāṇa,sati S 2** (A 8.74).

⁶ Note that in §13, it is said “they all claim these 5 positions...” but only 4 views are mentioned, the 5th view—on nirvana here and now—being omitted. See [2.6] for an explanation.

ese texts), suggests [1.2.2]. This older version was then expanded to include the “3 bases,” and the 5th view—on nirvana here and now—was displaced to the end of the Sutta.

1.2 ALTERNATE SUTTA TITLE

1.2.1 *Pañc’āyatana.* The Burmese Tipiṭaka (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana edition) gives the discourse’s alternate title as **Pañc’āyatana Sutta**, “the discourse on the 5 bases [positions].”⁷ This must have come from the phrase *pañc’āyatanāni* [§13] at M 2:233,10. As Skilling notes: “The passage itself poses problems..., and in its present position the phrase refers only to the first section of the body of discourse (Tib §§3-6) [§§3-13], leaving out (Tib) §7 [§14-16] and (Tib) §§8-10 [§§17-24].”⁸

As such, the title Pañc’āyatana does not encompass the complete text. Since the title *Pañca-t,taya* or its equivalent is well attested in other sources, the variant Pali title, concludes Skilling, “may be put down to a scribal vagary.” (1997: 472 f).⁹ [3.12.3; cf 2.6.1]

1.2.2 A clue to an older version?

1.2.2.1 On the other hand, this enigma might be a clue to an older version of the Sutta centering around the “5 bases” or positions. Note that the Tibetan translation opens with a general statement, “The recluses and brahmins who claim various theories (*adhimukti,pada*), all do so on 5 bases [positions] (Tib གནལ་པ་ *gnas pa*, Skt *sṭhāna, sṭhita*).”¹⁰

This purported older version of the “5 bases” is then expanded to include the “3 bases.” The section on the 5th view—on nirvana here and now—was then moved to the extended “3-base” sections, leaving an unnoticed hiatus in the “5-base” section. This might be an oversight on the part of the reciter, or when the text was written down, due to scribal error. Since we now know the possibility of such an error, when teaching the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, we would, at least, be able to explain how this could have possibly arisen, and set everything right in our own minds, having studied the Sutta as a whole.

1.2.2.2 *Apar’anta.* The Pali version, however, opens differently, saying: “There are, bhikshus, some recluses and brahmins who think about the future (*apar’anta*) [§2.1]. The usual word for “future” is *anāgata*. Here the translation, “future,” should be taken to have connotations that include “the hereafter” and “the afterlife,” reflecting the range of the Pañca-t,taya Sutta. [3.1.2]

Indeed, in the Sutta itself, the opening section on 5 “Speculations about the future” [§§3-13] deal with views regarding the future, that is, on those who claim [declare] numerous theories [dogmas] the after life or hereafter. This is followed by the 3 “Speculation on the past” [§§14-24].

1.3 THE OPENING SUMMARY (UDDESA)

1.3.1 Two summary lists

1.3.1.1 The opening summary (*uddesa*; Skt *uddeśa*), as a stylistic device, is common in both Mūla-sarvāstivāda and Thera,vāda sutras. It is located at the sutra opening, giving a summary of the topics, which are then elaborated in the rest of the sutra: this elaboration is technically known as the “analysis” (*vibhaṅga*).¹¹

1.3.1.2 Hence, we can see that the summaries (*uddesa*; Skt *uddeśa*) in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its parallels [2] give *two* lists of views. However, although they are *phrased* somewhat differently, they are *in spirit* the same: a longer list of 5 views followed by a shorter one of 3.¹²

⁷ M:Be 3:17,29, 18 n1; also noted by I B Horner (M:Ee 2:238 n2). Cf below on *āyatana* as “mind-base” [3.2.1.3].

⁸ I have added the prefix “Tib” before Skilling’s Tibetan refs and added cross-refs to the Pali. For the collation btw the Tib tr and the Pali, see Skilling 1997:505.

⁹ For other alt titles, see Schlingloff 1961:34 nn19+20. Further, on the title, see Lore Sander 1980:7.

¹⁰ Cf Skilling 1997:476.

¹¹ Examples of suttas that have the *uddesa* are **Saḷ-āyatana S** (M 137/3:216-222), SD 29.5, **Uddesa Vibhaṅga S** (M 138/3:223-229), SD 33.14, **Araṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 139/3:230-236), SD 7.8 and **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140/3:237-247), SD 4.17, all with prose summaries, and **Bhadd’eka,ratta Ss** (M 131-134), SD 9.0, with the same verse summary—the prose analyses (*vibhaṅga*) then follow in all these suttas

¹² The list of 5 views in the Pañca-t,taya S is found at **Vbh 378,16** as “the 5 views” (*pañca diṭṭhiyo*). **Pāsādika S** (D 29) lists 8 “(what are) dependent on views connected with the future” (*apar’anta,saha.gatā diṭṭhi,nissayā*) (**D 29.37/-3:139,21**), SD 40a.6.

In fact, we have the full list of 5 views, and the 3 views, conflating the first 5 views as follows:

<p><u>The first list: “the 5” [§2.1]</u></p> <p>(1) conscious survival of the self or soul (2) unconscious survival of the self or soul (3) neither conscious nor unconscious survival (4) annihilation at death (5) nirvana here and now</p>	}	<p><u>The second list: “the 3” [§2.2]</u></p> <p>(6) an intact self after death (7) annihilation after death (8) nirvana here and now</p>
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1.3.1.3 In the Tibetan translation, however, view (8), that is, the first of the 3 views, is worded more fully thus: “Some recluses and brahmins who proclaim consciousness assert that the self exists and is conscious after death.” Clearly, this cannot be right as this statement should cover the conscious, the unconscious and both. Moreover, the Tibetan sentence mentions only one and excludes the other two. These are probably errors in translation or transmission.

1.3.1.4 Here, the Pali version is more consistent. Each of the first 3 views [§2.1] has the term “intact [unimpaired]” (*aroga*) [3.2.2]. This, however, is not the case in the Tibetan translation. The Pali statement (6), that is, the first in the list of 3 views, as such, is consistent with the first 3 views (1-3) of the longer list of 5 views (unlike the Tibetan translation).¹³

1.3.2 Three future times. We have noted that the Sutta opens with 2 lists: one with 5 wrong views (4 on after-life states and one on nirvana) and another with 3 views (a sort of summary of the five) on how these views relate to the time of death. It is this (non-Buddhist) analysis of the self or soul in terms of “the five and the three” that gives the Sutta its name.

These analytical lists provide two complementary perspectives on the views regarding survival of the self or soul. The first list gives 5 main modes of asserting an abiding self. The second list treats the same 5 views in terms of three different future times, that is, as regards what will happen *after* death, *at* death, or *before* death [1.3.1].

1.3.3 Contents and analysis. The opening contents or summary (*uddesa*; Skt *uddeśa*), which lists all the 5 views, including those on “nirvana here and now,” pertaining to the future (*apar’anta*) [§2.1], as we have seen [1.3.1], does not present any problem. The rest of the Sutta (the “analysis”), however, deals only with items (1)-(4) of the opening summary [§2.1], then interpolates a long section on “speculations on the past” (*pubb’anta*; Skt *pūrvānta*) [§§14-16], before concluding with item (5) on “nirvana here and now” [§§17-24].¹⁴ This last arrangement—the placing of views on “nirvana here and now” *following* those on the past [§§14-16], are not mentioned in the opening summary. This is the problem we will now examine.

1.4 SUTTA VERSIONS

1.4.1 Here is the list of parallel versions of the Pañca-t, taya Sutta in other traditions:¹⁵

Sanskrit fragment	Hartmann 1991: 220-226, 232-233.
Sanskrit fragment	SHT III 882b(?).
Sanskrit fragment	SHT IV 32.1-6, 33.1-7.
Tibetan translation	Skilling 1994:310-383; with commentary, 1997:469-511.

¹³ See Skilling 1997:476-481.

¹⁴ Some suttas, on the other hand, open with a *dhmma pariāya* (Skt *dharma paryāya*, “a method of teaching Dharma, a Dharma exposition), or refer to it: V 1:40,27 (referring to Assaji’s verse *ye dhmma hetu-p.pabhavā...*); D 1:46,21 (*ko nāmo ayam bhante ~ō ti*); M 3:77,25 (*mahā,cattārisako ~o pavattito*); S 2:75,21 (*attha,samhitam,bhikkhu ~o ādi,bramma,cariyakōti*), S 4:85,4 (*yoga-k,khemi,pariāyam vo bhikkhave ~am desissāmi*). In these suttas, only *pariāya* is used and the whole phrase truncated or incorporated as their respective titles (omitting *pariāya*), eg **Mūla Pariāya S** (M 1, *sabba,dhmma,mūla,pariāya*); **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2, *sabb’āsava,pariāya*); **Vana,pattha S** (M 17, *vana,pattha,pariāya*). Instead of *pariāya*, the term *vibhaṅga* (“analysis”) is used in M 137-139 (see prec n). See M:H 1:xv f.

¹⁵ For access to textual sources, see [Sutta Central](http://SuttaCentral).

1.4.2 Parts of the Pañca-t,taya Sutta are preserved in Sanskrit fragments,¹⁶ and there is a full Tibetan translation of its Mūla,sarvāstivāda version, called *mdo chen pa lnga gsum pa zhes bya ba*, or in Sanskrit, **Pañca,traya-nāma-mahā,sūtra**, or more simply, the Pañca,traya Sūtra. It was translated by Ye-Shes-sDe (Yéshédé) (late 8th-early 9th centuries), and assisted by Jinamitra and Prajñāvarman.¹⁷

1.4.3 Peter Skilling has done a detailed comparative study of the Tibetan translation with the Pali versions¹⁸ (*Mahāsūtras: Great Discourses of the Buddha*, 1994+1997). A more detailed study, following up on Skilling's work, is found in **Analayo's** *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya* (2011:590-603). Much of the scholarly comments here are based on the works of these two scholars, as attested in the cross-references, which should be followed up accordingly. Here, we shall focus on the practical and spiritual aspects of the Sutta.

2 Sutta summary and problems

2.1 FUTURE OR PAST?

2.1.1 It is possible that in the process of transmission, the two discourses—the Brahma,jāla Sutta and the Pañca-t,taya Sutta—influenced one another. The Pañca-t,taya Sutta or Pañc'āyatana Sutta, as the name suggests, deals with only 5 bases or positions (*āyatana*). In due course, following the example of the Brahma,jāla Sutta, sections of the Sutta were adapted to reflect the more impressive Brahma,jāla Sutta.

2.1.2 Interestingly, the summary (*uddesa*) in the Pali Sutta [§2.1] lists all the 5 views, including those on “nirvana here and now,” as pertaining to the future (*apar'anta*). But in the Sutta itself, the views regarding “nirvana here and now” [§§17-24] are placed *following* those on the past [§§14-16], a sequence not mentioned in the opening summary [1.3]. The Tibetan translation, the Pañca,traya Sūtra [1.4], on the other hand, makes no such mention at all.

2.1.3 The Pali and two Tibetan versions of the Brahma,jāla Sutta, however, agree with the Pali Pañca-t,taya Sutta [§§17-24] in putting views regarding “nirvana here and now” under views about the past.¹⁹ Here again, we see the Pañca-t,taya Sutta following the Brahma,jāla pattern, according to this scheme of views, namely,

(1) survival of a conscious self	after death,	[2.2.1(1)]
(2) survival of an unconscious self	after death,	[2.2.1(2)]
(3) survival of a neither conscious nor unconscious self	after death,	[2.2.1(3)]
(4) annihilation of the self	at death,	[2.2.1(4)]
(5) nirvana here and now	before death.	[2.3]

2.2 THE THEORIES OF CONSCIOUS SURVIVAL

2.2.1 Speculations about the future [§§3-13].

(1) CONSCIOUS SURVIVAL [§§3-4]

§3.1 (1-4) The Pañca-t,taya Sutta deals with the first of the 5 types of views, those concerned with a self or soul that is conscious after death, that is, a surviving conscious entity. The Sutta lists 8 *variations* of such a self in two traditional tetrads or alternatives,²⁰ the first dealing with form [§3(1-4)], and the second, with consciousness [§3(5-8)].

¹⁶ For a detailed collation of these fragments with Pañca-t,taya S, see Skilling 1997:500-504. For biblio details, see Analayo 2011:590 n21.

¹⁷ Ed in Skilling 1994:310-382, with a detailed study in Skilling 1997:469-511. As noted by Skilling 1997:14, the Tib parallel to Pañcattaya S is that of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda. See Analayo 2011 590 n22.

¹⁸ Skilling critically compares 11 eds of the Tib version with 3 Pali versions (Be Ee Se): see Skilling 1994:310-383 & 1997:469-511.

¹⁹ D 1.19/1:36,17 f; (Tokyo Kanjur): 1.86b6 f, 2tu175a5 f. See Skilling 1997:476.

²⁰ Traditionally known as the *catu,koṭi* (Skt *catuṣ,koṭi*). Actually the traditional tetrad applies only in the first tetrad. On the Buddha's rejection of all such tetrads, see **Unanswered questions**, SD 40a.10.

The Tibetan version omits two of these eight variations: it does not mention the self that *both has form and is formless* and the self that *neither has form nor is formless*.²¹ **The Brahma, jāla Sutta** (D 1), and its Chinese and Tibetan parallels agree in this respect with the Pañca-t, taya Sutta, in presenting a conscious self that *has form and is formless* and a conscious self that *neither has form nor is formless* in their respective treatment of various types of surviving conscious self.²²

(5-6) Both the Pañca-t, taya Sutta, and its Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels mention the views on selves with *unified* [single or common] consciousness and with *diversified* consciousness.²³ **The Brahma, jāla Sutta** (D 1), and its Chinese and Tibetan parallels also have the same list.²⁴

(7-8) Both the Sutta, and its Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels agree in mentioning selves that have *limited* consciousness and that have *boundless* consciousness.²⁵ The Tibetan version, however, adds a self whose consciousness has “become great.”²⁶

§3.2 The Pali version’s list of conscious selves next mentions the consciousness kasiṇa²⁷ [§3.2]. The Tibetan version speaks instead of the “*sphere* of infinite consciousness.”²⁸ The Sutta Commentary, however, explains that the consciousness-kasiṇa in this context indeed refers to the sphere of infinite consciousness.²⁹ This is a vital intertextual clue, which gives us a hint of the original or urtext, or at least, the likely older meaning of the term [3.2.2].

²¹ §3(3) (M 102/2:229,4): *rūpiṇ ca arūpiṇ ca... n’eva rūpiṇ nārūpiṇ*. These 2 categories seem to be missing from the Skt version, as, after listing form and formless types of self, DĀ (Skt) fragments 299v8 and 300v3 continue with a type of self that has a unified consciousness, a category that, in the Sutta, comes after the neither-form-nor-formless type of self: see §3(5) (M 2:229,8).

²² D 1.76/1:31,8: *rūpī ca arūpī ca... n’eva rūpī nārūpī*, DĀ 21 @ T1.92b23: 有色無色...非有色非無色, T1.21.268b9: 有色無色...不有色亦不無色, Weller 1934:48,16: *gzugs dang ldan pa yang ma yin la, gzugs dang mi ldan pa yang ma yin pa’i*.

²³ In early Buddhist cosmology, “unified consciousness” refers to brahmas of the 2nd and the 4th dhyanas, and the beings of the subhuman realms (asuras, pretas, animals, and hell-beings); “diverse consciousness,” to the brahmas of the 1st and the 3rd dhyanas, the devas of the sense-worlds, humans and some beings of the subhuman realms. For details, see *Viññāṇa-t, thiti*, SD 23.14 esp Table 3.

²⁴ D 1.76/1:31,11: *ek’atta, saññī attā hoti... nān’atta, saññī*, DĀ 21 @ T1.92c5: 生有一想...生有若干想; T1.21268b-19+23: 一想為有我...種種思想為有我. See Skilling 1994:314. (Analayo omits these 2 Sutta items.)

²⁵ §3(7+8) (M 102/2:229,11): *paritta, saññīm... appamāṇa, saññīm*. SHT IV 33 fol 1B2: *apramāṇasam(jñi)*, Hoernle fragment 149/Add 154V1, no 126 in Hartmann 1991:222: *[ap]r(amā)ṇa[sa](m)[j]ñ[i]* (ibid corrects to *°samjñi*), and another Hoernle fragment (photo 173) R7, no 131 in Hartmann 1991:234: *[pa]rit[t]asamj[ñ]i (a)p[ramāṇa]sa(mjñi)*; see also DĀ (Skt) fragment 300v1+3. Skilling 1994:314,16: *’du shes chung ba... ’du shes tshad med pa*.

²⁶ Skilling 1994:314,17: *’du shes chen por gyur pa* which, as Skilling notes, would correspond to *mah’aggata, saññī* (Skt *mahad, gata, samjñi*). In the suttas, the qualifications “boundless” and “become great” often function as near-synonyms (1997:484): see eg, the stock passage on the divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*), eg **Vatthūpama S** (M 7.16/-1:38,23): *maha-g, gatena appamāṇena* and in its parallel MĀ 93 @ T1.575c13: “very great, boundless,” 甚大, 無量; see also a description of such radiation in **Mahā, parinirvāṇa, sūtra**, fragment 362 folio 167V5 (Waldschmidt 1950:59): *mahadgatenāpra(māṇena)*. On how these two terms differ when applied to “mental liberation,” *ceto, vimutti*, see **Anuruddha S** (M 127.7/3:146,13) and its parallel MĀ 79 @ T1.550a9. As M 102 and its Tib parallel describe views on a conscious self by working through pairs of opposites, once a contrast to “limited” has been provided by “boundless,” it seems redundant to bring in additionally a self whose perceptions have “become great.” The ref to *mahaggata, saññī* (Skt *mahadgata, samjñi*) precedes *appamāṇa, saññī* (Skt *apramāṇa, samjñi*) and thus conforms to the sequence found when these 2 terms are listed together in contexts like the *brahma, vihāra* meditation. Perhaps *mahaggata, saññī* (Skt *mahadgata, samjñi*) orig merely in apposition to *appamaṇa, saññī* (Skt *apramaṇa, samjñi*) and only later came to be a separate item. (Analayo)

²⁷ §3.2 (M 102/2:229,15): *viññāṇa, kasiṇam eke abhivadanti* (M:Ce 3:30,31: *viññāṇa, kasiṇam*).

²⁸ Skilling 1994:316,1: *rnam shes mtha’ yas skye mched*; see also SHT IV 32 folio 1R4, which reads *v[i]jñān[ā]-nam[t]ya*.

²⁹ MA 4:18,7. On the *viññāṇa, kasiṇa*, see (3.2.3).

§4 Both versions next turn to the “sphere of nothingness”³⁰ [§4.2], which is said to be the supreme consciousness. The Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its parallels agree that the Buddha has fully understood the conditioned nature of such notions of a conscious surviving self, and gone beyond them [§4.4; 4.3].

The Tibetan version presents the next view regarding a conscious surviving self as a single view.³¹ The Pali Sutta, however, treats it as a tetralemma, listing the selves by having form, being formless, both, and neither [§4.1]

(2) UNCONSCIOUS SURVIVAL [§§5-7]

§5 The Brahma,jāla Sutta, and its Chinese and Tibetan counterparts further analyse these views regarding an unconscious self in *eight* ways, by adding another tetrad of such a self being limited, unlimited, both, or neither.³²

(3) NEITHER-CONSCIOUS-NOR-UNCONSCIOUS SURVIVING SELF [§§8-10]

The same differentiation is made for a self that is neither-conscious-nor-unconscious, which the Tibetan version presents as a single proposal, while the Pañca-t,taya Sutta offers a tetralemma³³ [§8]. The Brahma,jāla Sutta and its parallels list *eight* variations of this type of self.³⁴

The Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its Tibetan parallel then say that those who hold the view of an unconscious surviving self would criticize those who propose a conscious surviving self, that perception is “an illness,...a barb,...a dart”³⁵ [§9.3]. Those who uphold a self that is neither-conscious-nor-unconscious then criticize the proponents of an unconscious surviving self, claiming that unconsciousness is delusion³⁶ [§9.3]. The two versions agree with the Sanskrit fragments that it is impossible for consciousness to arise apart from the other aggregates³⁷ [§10.2].

The Pali Sutta rejects the view that the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception can be attained through what is seen, heard, sensed, or cognized, as this sphere must be attained with “a mere residue of formations”³⁸ [§10.3]. The Tibetan version is less clear here: besides remarking on the seen, heard, sensed, and cognized, it also mentions such topics as morality, discipline, celibacy, and ascetic practices.³⁹

³⁰ §4.2 (M 102/2:230,2): *akiñcaññ'āyatana* = *ci yang med pa'i skye mched* (Skilling 1994: 318,3); see also DĀ (Skt) fragment 300v4-5. In view of the use of “sphere” (*āyatana*) here in all versions, its Tib version's earlier usage in connection with consciousness seems to conform more with the rest of the text than the Pali version's reference to the consciousness “*kasina*,” ie, if this has the sense of a *type* of meditation or a meditation *device*: see above §3.2 nm & Intro (3.2.3).

³¹ Skilling 1994:318,12: *bdag 'du shes med par 'gyur ro*.

³² D 1/1:32,10, DĀ 21 @ T.1.92c17, T 21 @ T1.268c25, and Weller 1934:50,34.

³³ M 102/2:230,7 and Skilling 1994:324,6.

³⁴ D 1/1:33,10, DĀ 21 @ T1.93a6, T1.21.269a6, and Weller 1934:54,1.

³⁵ A discourse quotation paralleling the present discussion in M 102 at M 2:230,17 can be found in **Abhidharma-kośa,bhāṣya** (Abhdk) 8.4 (Pradhan 1967: 436,9); see also T1558 @ T29.146b11, T1559 @ T28.297c17, and Abhdk 2 at D (4094) *mngon pa, nyu* 71b5 or Q (5595) *thu* 116a7; a quote of the present statement on perception being “a disease” occurs also in Śrāvaka,bhūmi (Deleanu 2006a:343,6 or Shukla 1973:460,1 and T1579 @ T30.469a12).

³⁶ §9.3 (M 102/2:231,17): *asañña sammoho* = Tib 'du shes med pa yang kun tu rmongs pa 'o (Skilling 1994:326,11). Here the Tib version again uses “sphere,” *'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched*, but which is not found here in the Sutta (M 102). A few lines later, at §10.2 (M 102/2:231,30), it does use “sphere” to refer to the attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, *etassa ayatanassa*, so that here, again, the Tib version is more consistent in its terminology. See Intro (3.2.3).

³⁷ Hoernle fragment 149/Add 154R3, no 126 in Hartmann 1991:223: (*upapa*)[t]t(im) vā *vairuḍhim vṛ*(*ddhim vā*), R4: (*anya*)tra *saṃjñāyāḥ anyatra saṃskā*(*rebhyaḥ*), and R5: (*prajñāpa*)[y](i)ṣyāmi; see also DĀ (Skt) fragment 300r4. A similar statement is found in (**Viññāṇa**) **Bija S** (S 22.54.12/3:55,10), SD 8.3 (2006:1164): see Hata 2006: 1164.

³⁸ M 102 at M 2:232,2.

³⁹ Skilling 1994:330,7: *tshul khirms dang, brtul zhugs dang...tshangs par spyod pa dang, dka' thub dang*. This listing brings to mind stanzas in **Sutta Nipāta**, which in a similar vein associate what is seen, heard, and sensed with vows and rituals (Sn 4.4/790, 4.5/797+798, 4.12/887, which combine *diṭṭha, suta, muta* (“seen, heard, sensed”) with *sīla,vata* or *sīla-b,bata*, glossed as *sīla-b,bata,parāmasa*, “attachment to rituals and vows” (Nm 86,27-87,3); also Sn 4.9/839+840, which combines *diṭṭha, suta*, and *ñāna* (“knowledge”) with *sīla-b,bata*. ***Mahā,prajñā,pāramita(upa-**

The Tibetan version describes the attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception as “the peak of existence.”⁴⁰ Although the Pañca-t,taya Sutta does not make this point, **the Bhaddaji Sutta** (A 5.170) *does* make such a point.⁴¹ Apparently, the Tibetan version either restates the same fact differently or is here a translation of an older text. This, however, does not mean that the Pali Sutta is based on a later text, but that there is a possibility of changes or errors in transmission.

(4) THE ANNIHILATED SELF [§§11-12]

The Pañca-t,taya Sutta next turns to annihilationism [§11]. While the Pali Sutta presents annihilationism as a single idea, the Tibetan version gives a more detailed analysis, distinguishing between *seven* possible instances of this view.⁴² The Brahma,jāla Sutta, and its Chinese and Tibetan parallels, similarly distinguish between seven variations of annihilationism.⁴³ Here again, we can see that although the Tibetan translation is sometimes worded differently, it concurs with the Pali version in spirit.

The Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its Tibetan parallel say that the annihilationists use the figure of a trader to criticize the various view of a surviving self [§11.6]. The two versions say that the annihilationists are caught up in fear on account of the belief in self-identity,⁴⁴ which the Pali version illustrates with the parable of a dog leashed to a post that moves in a circle around it⁴⁵ [§12.3].

2.2.2 Speculations about the past [§§14-16]

2.2.2.1 [§14] Both the Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its Tibetan parallel list a set of 16 views about the past. Both versions agree in presenting the possibility that the self and the world according to the tetralemma of being eternal, not eternal, both or neither. The Pali Sutta applies the tetralemma to the views of the finiteness of the self and the world, and to the view that the self and the world experience only pleasure. In addition to the eight views that result from applying the tetralemma to these two topics, it also presents the two views that the self and the world could be percipient of unity or diversity, and the two views that they could be of limited or boundless perception.

All these total 12 views, but none of them occur in the Tibetan version. The Pali Sutta’s listing of these views in the present context is, in fact, puzzling, notes **Analayo**, since a self with a unitary or a diverse perception, as well as a self with a limited or a boundless perception, have already been covered under views related to the future. Although the formulation is slightly different in as much as the present instance includes not only the “self” but also the “world” in its treatment, this difference would not seem sufficient for assigning such views to the past instead of the future. (2011:600)

2.2.2.2 The Brahma,jāla Sutta and its Chinese and Tibetan parallels agree in listing views regarding a self with a unified consciousness (a single universal soul) or a diverse consciousness [§14(9-10)], and views on a self with a limited consciousness or a boundless consciousness [§14(11-12)] to views related to the future. Then, there are the four views regarding a finite self or an infinite self, and for the four more views on a self that experiences only joy or one that experiences only pain.

deśa)śāstra (T1.509/25.63c17 (in a quote of a version of Sn 839) also combines what is “seen, heard, and known,” 見, 聞知覺 (with a 元 and 明 variant reading as 見, 聞覺知), which according to Lamotte 1944:66 corresponds to *dr̥ṣṭi*, *śruti*, and *jñāna* (Skt for *diṭṭha*, *suta*, *ñāna*), with “keeping the precepts,” 持戒. Jayawickrama says that such instances are “a curious combination of functions of the senses on the one hand and external practices on the other” (1978:50). See also Premasiri 1972:27 f.

⁴⁰ Skilling 1994:330,11: *srid pa’i rtse mo*; at 489 n54, he draws attention to a statement in Abhdk 1:23, which similarly indicates that the peak of existence is attained by mere formations, *saṃskāra,mātra,prabhāvitam bhavāgram* (Pradhan 1967:15,15; also T1558/29.5c14: 第一有中思最為勝, 行相顯了 and T1559/29.166a16: 有頂唯行所顯).

⁴¹ A 5.170/3:202,17, SD 95.4.

⁴² §11.6 (M 102/2:232,7) and Skilling 1994:338,7.

⁴³ D 1/1:34,6; DĀ 21 @ TI 93a24, T1.21.269b7; Weller 1934:56,6; also a Skt fragment parallel to this passage in Hartmann 1989:54 f. These 7 modes take up a self that corresponds to the physical body, to a divine form self, to a mind-made self, and to a self that corresponds to one of the 4 formless attainments.

⁴⁴ Ñāṇavīra explains: “Any attempt I make to abolish my existence tacitly confirms it, for it is my existence that I am seeking to abolish.” (1987:81)

⁴⁵ This figure recurs in **Gaddula,baddha S 1** (S 22.99/ 3:150,7), SD 28.7a and **Gaddula,baddha S 2** (S 22:100/-3:151,6), SD 28.7b to illustrate the predicament of identifying with the 5 aggregates.

All these 12 views in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta that are *not* found in its Tibetan counterpart should, according to the Pali, Chinese, and Tibetan versions of the Brahma,jāla Sutta indeed not be taken as views about *the past*, but rather as views concerned with the future.⁴⁶

2.2.2.3 In addition to the four views regarding the past, common to both the Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its parallels, the Tibetan version applies the tetralemma to the views that the self and the world are due to our own action or to another's, that self and unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) are eternal or not eternal, and that self and unsatisfactoriness are caused by our own deeds or another's deeds.⁴⁷ The Sanskrit fragments have preserved part of a similar exposition.⁴⁸ **The Pāsādika Sutta** (D 29) deals with the same set of views, confirming that they are indeed related to the past.⁴⁹

2.2.2.4 [§15] The Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its Tibetan parallel point out that such statements about the past are not the outcome of personal realization, but are merely rooted in *faith, liking, oral tradition, reasoning, or acceptance of a view*.⁵⁰ The Sutta states, “That such a knowledge will be pure and clear personal knowledge—this is impossible” [§15.3], meaning that their view-holders can only uphold this claim on some ground other than direct knowledge, that is, only as a belief or as reasoning. In any case, according to **the Caṅkī Sutta** (M 95), it may still turn out to be either true or false.⁵¹

2.3 THE “NIRVANA HERE AND NOW” SECTION [§§17-22]

2.3.1 Unlisted in summary. Even if we ignore the *uddesa*, the text order itself is unusual. Traditionally, the time sequence in the suttas would be *past, future and present* [3.1], such as in the Brahma,jāla Sutta (D 1) (both the Pali and the Tibetan), which opens with the grounds for views on the past,⁵² and then grounds for views on the future which includes the views on “nirvana here and now,” with its “5 grounds,” that is, (the wrong views) that nirvana as sensual pleasures, and as each of the four dhyanas.⁵³

In fact, the Pañca-t,taya Sutta section on “nirvana here and now” [§§17-22] also lists the 4 dhyanas [4.4.4], but omits the first view (nirvana as sense-pleasures). It also treats the first two dhyanas as one item [§§17-18], effectively listing only three views under this category. Apparently, here the Sutta is simply pointing to the wrong views of nirvana misconceived as the dhyanas. The Buddha teaches that even dhyanas need to be transcended until we have attained awakening.⁵⁴

2.3.2 Views about dhyanas. In both the Pali Sutta and its Tibetan translation, the section on “nirvana here and now” forms the Buddha's closing instructions. The section similarly deals with the four form dhyanas, presented in three ways, that is, as the “bliss of seclusion,” as “unworldly pleasure,” and as “neu-

⁴⁶ D 1.14/1:31,9; DĀ 21 @ T1.92b25; T1.21.268a27; Weller 1934: 48,18; parts of this treatment have also been preserved in SHT 3:803 V8-12 (p. 6).

⁴⁷ Skilling 1994:348,3.

⁴⁸ Hoernle fragment 149/187V6, no 127 in Hartmann 1991:224 has preserved: (*duh*)*kham ca svayamkr[i](a) atma ca lokaś [c]a* and V7: *sva[ya]m[kr]ta (atma ca duh)kham ca*; cf also DĀ (Skt) fragment 303r4-5.

⁴⁹ D 29.34/3:137 f @ SD 40a.6. Skilling 1997:491 notes that these views recur in D 29/3:137,24 and U 6.5/69,26. D 29/3:137,15 explicitly relates these views to *the past*, suggesting that the exposition given to views about the past in the Tib parallel fits the context better than the Pali version.

⁵⁰ §15.2 (M 102/2:234,7) lists *saddhā, ruci, anussava, ākāra,parivitatka*, and *diṭṭhi,nijjhāna-k,khanti* respectively. These 5 grounds for views recur in **Caṅkī S** (M 95.14/2:170 f), SD 21.15. Their Tib counterparts are *dad pa, 'dod pa, thos pa brgyud pa, rnam pa la yongs su rtog pa*, and *mthong bas nges par rtogs pa'i bzod pa* in Skilling 1994: 350,6; also Hoernle fragment 149/187V2, no 127 in Hartmann 1991:224: (*a*)*nya(trānu)[śr]aveṇa anyatrākāraparivitatki* and DĀ (Skt) fragment 303r6. Skilling 1997: 492 notes a difference in formulation, as §§15.4+16.4 see such views as occasions of “clinging,” *upādāna*, while its Tibetan counterpart (Skilling 1994:350,13) regards such as to be a rooted in a “lack of knowledge,” *mi shes pa*, a reading supported by the Skt fragment Hoernle 149/187V4, no 127 in Hartmann 1991:224: (*a*)*j[ñ]ānam* and R2: *ā[jñ](ā)nam*.

⁵¹ M 95.14/2:170 f @ SD 21.15.

⁵² D 1.28-73/1:13-30 @ SD 25.2.

⁵³ D 1.74-98/1:30-39 @ SD 25.2. The section on “nirvana here and now” is §§93-98 with 5 grounds.

⁵⁴ See (**Pañcāla,caṇḍa**) **Sambādha S**, SD 33.2 & **Pabbateyya Gāvī S** (A 9.35/4:418-422), SD 24.3.

tral feeling” [§§17-20]. A threefold treatment is also found in the Sanskrit fragments.⁵⁵ The Pali Commentary explains that

“the mental solitude that is zest” refers to	the first and the second dhyanas,
“spiritual joy” to	the third jhana, and
“neutral feeling” to	the fourth jhana. ⁵⁶

Both the Pali and Tibetan versions then say that what arises when these dhyanas cease: they each would be replaced by a *grosser* mental state. Thus, in the case of the meditator unfamiliar with dhyanas, when mental solitude that is zest ceases, *grief* will take its place [§17.4], a situation both versions illustrate with the alternation between sunlight and shade.⁵⁷

While the Pali Sutta uses the same figure for the other two dhyanas, the Tibetan version gives each a different one. The changes between the solitude that is zest and spiritual joy is compared to the fluctuations of water rising and falling. Changes between neutral feeling and spiritual joy are compared to a stick thrown up into space, which may fall on its side or on its tip.⁵⁸

2.3.3 False awakenings

2.3.3.1 The Pañca-t, taya Sutta and its parallels next [§17] examine a recluse or brahmin who thinks he has attained nirvana. Both versions say that this person believes himself to be free from attachment. The Tibetan version, however, adds that he claims to be without craving, a notion also recorded in the Sanskrit fragment.⁵⁹

According to the Tibetan version, this misguided person thinks that he no longer has the self he had earlier.⁶⁰ This notion is simply a deep misunderstanding of his, one impossible for a learner (*sekha*), that is, a disciple of the path of higher training. Such a one, by realizing streamwinning, would know that there has never been a self in the first place.

As such, in the Tibetan version, it is clear why his claim to realization can be dismissed as a personal delusion. In the Pali version, the problem with this person seems to be one of self-centeredness, rooted in the misconception that ‘I’ have attained peace, ‘I’ have attained nirvana. The Commentary explains such a claim as a manifestation of conceit (*māna*), the presence of which clearly contradicts any claim to full awakening.⁶¹

⁵⁵ §17.2 (M 102/2:235,13): “the mental solitude that is zest,” *paviveka pīti* = Tib *rab tu dben pa’i dga’ ba* (Skilling 1994:358,2); §19.2 (M 102/2:235,32): “spiritual joy,” *niramisaṃ sukhaṃ* = *zang zing med pa’i bde ba* (Skilling 1994:362,6); §21.2 (M 102/2:236,23): “neutral feeling,” *adukkham-asukhā vedanā*, *SDug bsngal yang ma yin bde ba yang ma yin pa’i tshor ba* (Skilling 1994:368,3). SHT IV 33 folio 3V1 and R2 reads *pravivekām prīti(m)* and *nirāmiṣa (sukha)*; see also DĀ (Skt) fragments 303v4+6+8 and 304v?4+6+8. SHT IV 33 folio 7V1 has preserved *aduḥkhāsu(khā)* and Hoernle fragment 149/Add.49V4, no 128 in Hartmann 1991: 226 has preserved *(a)[du]ḥ[kha]-sukh(ām)*; see also DĀ (Skt) fragments 304r1+7+8 and 305r2 (although the last occurs in a later passage, it refers to the experience of neutral feeling described in the present context). (Based on Analayo)

⁵⁶ MA 4:26,4+20+21.

⁵⁷ §17.4 (M 102/2:235,13): *pavivekāya pītiya nirodhā uppajjati domanassaṃ* = Tib *rab tu dben pa’i bde ba ’gags pa las yid mi bde ba ’byung bar ’gyur la* (Skilling 1994:360,2); see also DĀ (Skt) fragment 304v?1 [sic].

⁵⁸ Skilling 1994:366,1 and 372,7; see also DĀ (Skt) fragment 305r6. Skilling 1994:373 notes that the second parable has a Pali counterpart in **Daṇḍa S 1** (S 15.9/2:184,29) and **Daṇḍa S 2** (S 56.33/5:439,22), where it illustrates the ups and downs of rebirth in samsara.

⁵⁹ SHT IV 33 folio 7V2: *(ni)str̥ṣṇo ’ham ’asmi nirupādāno ’ham-asmi*, Hoernle fragment 149/Add. 49V1, no 128 in Hartmann 1991:226: *[n]istr̥ṣṇo) ’[h](a)[m]-(asmi)*, and the Tib version in Skilling 1994:376,8: *nga ni sred pa med pa’o*.

⁶⁰ Skilling 1994:376,9: *nga la sngon bdag yod par gyur pa de ni da ltar nga la med do*, rendered by Skilling 1997: 493 as “the self which I formerly had is now not,” see also DĀ (Skt) fragment 305v5+7.

⁶¹ MA 4:27,4 suggests that this person’s claim is made with *abhimāna*, “excessive conceit.” Collins comments that the passage reveals the presence of “a form of attachment...because the claim is still phrased in terms of ‘I.’” (1982:122)

2.3.3.2 While the Tibetan version highlights that this person is still has attachment and clinging,⁶² the Pali version, presents him as claiming to have attained the path to awakening.⁶³ This reflects the basic difference in the person's perception of his spiritual attainment in their respective cases. In the Tibetan version, the person thinks that he has successfully abandoned a self he had earlier. As such, he is still holding a self-view, one that constitutes the path of attachment and clinging.

The Pali Sutta presents the person as simply declaring himself to be at peace, to have attained nirvana, and to be without attachment. The attainment to peace and the freedom from such an attachment are immediately mentioned in the next paragraph here, in the Buddha's proclamation to have reached supreme liberation.⁶⁴

2.3.3.3 The same qualities actually form a stock passage on the attainment of nirvana, that is, as being peaceful (*santa*) and tags it with a series of attributes referring to the removal of all attachment.⁶⁵ According to **the Mahā Maluñkyā,putta Sutta** (M 64), this stock passage points to the "path" to the breaking of the 5 lower fetters, leading to non-return or full awakening.⁶⁶ As the Sutta indicates, this stock passage refers to the mind's turning towards the deathless element.⁶⁷ A discourse in the Aṅguttara Nikāya in fact refers to this as a form of concentration.⁶⁸

Hence, concludes **Analayo**, the person's claim, as recorded in in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, "even though based on an over-estimation, in itself would indeed be a path conducive to nirvana, all the more as it is based on the ability to attain the four jhanas."⁶⁹ The Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its parallels conclude by describing the Buddha's attainment of full liberation [§25], thus highlighting that he had transcended all the views and positions examined in this Sutta. (2011:601-603)

2.3.4 Views and thoughts

2.3.4.1 The Pali and the Tibetan versions introduce their respective examinations of the dhyanas and views on "nirvana here and now" by saying that views about the past and the future have been "given up" [§17.1].⁷⁰ The Sutta summary, however, classifies views on "nirvana here and now" as those that related to the future [§2.1]. If views about the future have been given up, why is there any need to deal with future views about nirvana again? [3.3.1]

Analayo suggests a solution for this, that is, in a minor change in terminology in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its Tibetan parallel. When presenting the five and three modes of views, the Pali and Tibetan versions

⁶² Skilling 1994:376,12: *nye bar len pa dang 'thun par 'gro ba'i lam*, Hoernle fragment 149/Add. 49V2, no 128 in Hartmann 1991:226: (*upā*)[*d*]*āna*[*sa*]*m*preyag(*ā*)*m*[*i*](*nī*).

⁶³ §24.4 (M 102/2:237,15): *addhā ayam āyasmā nibbānaṃ sappāyam eva paṭipadaṃ abhivadati* (M:Be 3:26,5: *nibbāna,sappāyam yeva*; M:Ce3:42,12: *nibbāna,sappāyañ ñeva*; M:Se 3:39,20: *nibbāna,sappāyam eva*).

⁶⁴ At §25.1 (M 102/2:237,28), the Buddha declares his having reached the "supreme peace," *anuttaraṃ santi,vara,-padaṃ* (M:Se 3:40,11: *santaṃ varaṃ padaṃ*), and the "liberation through non-clinging," *anupādā vimokkha*, terminology similar to the "peace" and the "absence of attachment" in the claim made at §24.3 (M 102/2:237,12).

⁶⁵ M 64.9/1:436,1 @ SD 21.10: "This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, namely, the stilling of all formations, the letting go of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana," *etaṃ santaṃ, etaṃ pañītaṃ, yad idaṃ sabba,saṅkhāra,samatho sabbūpadhi,paṭinissaggo taṇha-k,khayo virāgo nirodho nibbānaṃ'ti*. Here, *saṅkhāra* is pl, reflecting the unawakened state; but is sg (*saṅkhāro*) when it describes an arhat's mind: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.13-15/1:301) + SD 40a.9 (2.4).

⁶⁶ M 64.9/1:435,26 @ SD 21.10: *maggo...paṭipadā pañcannaṃ orambhagiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ pahānāya* (M:Ce 2:168,27 and M:Se 2:159,10: *saññyojanānaṃ*).

⁶⁷ M 64.9/1:435,36 @ SD 21.10: *amatāya dhātuṃyā cittaṃ upasaṃharati*. A similar type of practice is described in Vism 293,6 under the heading "recollection of peace," *upasaṃnussati*.

⁶⁸ (**Anusaya**) **Ānanda S** (A 3.32/1:133,4), SD 31.8a: *samādhi,paṭilābho*.

⁶⁹ With this suggestion, says **Analayo**, he ventures to differs from Skilling 1997: 495, who comments: "Can a statement made by someone who is attached—a statement itself described as a manifestation of attachment—refer to the 'practice conducive to nibbana'...when the statement itself does not describe any practice, but only a deluded assertion of attainment?" (Analayo 2011:603 n 94)

⁷⁰ Tib version: Skilling 1994:356,8.

speak of “views” (*ditṭhi*) and “thoughts” (*kappa*) in relation to the future [§§2.1, 13].⁷¹ Although one would think that “views” and “thoughts” are here used as near-synonyms, the lack of any reference to “thoughts” in the present passage could perhaps indicate that whereas the first four modes (regarding a conscious self, a non-conscious self, a self that is neither, and a self that will be annihilated) can be reckoned as full-fledged “views,” the two versions of the Sutta does not consider the fifth mode, that is, “nirvana here and now” as a full-fledged instance of “views,” but only as “thoughts” or ways of “reasoning” about the future.

2.3.4.2 This means that, although at the present point, “views” relating to the future have been given up, the same may not yet be the case for “thoughts” about the future. The assumption that “nirvana here and now” should indeed be assigned to the future finds support in the Brahmajāla Sutta and also its Chinese and Tibetan parallels, all of which treat views on “nirvana here and now” under the category of thoughts and views related to the future.⁷²

Moreover, the sequence of the treatment found in the Brahmajāla Sutta and its Chinese and Tibetan parallels suggest that an examination of views about the past should *precede* views about the future.⁷³ Taking a lead from the Brahmajāla Sutta’s sequence, notes **Analayo**,

perhaps the section on views about the past in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta should also precede the exposition of views about the future. On the assumption that the section on views about the past originally could have stood right at the beginning of the discourse and might then accidentally have been shifted to the wrong place during the course of the discourse’s transmission, much of the difficulties noted so far could be resolved. (2011:597)

2.3.5 The 5 and the 3. This, however, continue Analayo, would imply that the statement on “the five and the three” was not an introduction to the Sutta as a whole, but *only to its examination of views and thoughts related to the future*. This is indeed the case in the Pali version, which specifies the five and the three to be concerned with the future [§2.1]. However, this would not fit as an introduction to the Sutta as a whole, as it does not take the 16 types of view regarding the past [§16] into account.

While the general treatment of views in the two Pañca-t,taya Suttas is relatively similar to the Brahmajāla Sutta and its parallels, the analysis of views about the future into “the five and the three” is *a peculiarity of the present discourse*,⁷⁴ so that it is well known under that title [2.6.1]

2.3.6 Following the Brahmajāla Sutta?

2.3.6.1 The Tibetan Pañca,taya Sūtra concludes by saying, “So many, monks, are the views relating to the past” (§6.19), “so many, monks, are the views relating to future” (§7.11), and “so many, monks, are the ways that those who claim ‘nirvana here and now’” (§11.9).⁷⁵ The Tibetan translation, as such, treats the views about “nirvana here and now” as a separate category, rather than under “the past,” as in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, and the Tibetan and Pali versions of the Brahmajāla Sutta.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Although the Tib version does not have this specification in its introductory section (Skilling 1994:312,1 and Skilling 1997:476), it does make the same point at the end of its examination of the five and three types of view, *phyi ma’i mthar rtog pa dag*, *phyi ma’i mtha’ dang ldan pa’i lta ba’i rnam pa dag* in Skilling 1994:346,6. [Analayo]

⁷² D 1.100a/1:38,25: *aparanta,kappikā aparantānudiṭṭhino*, DĀ 21 @ T1.93c9: 末劫未見, T1.21.270b28: 於當來劫中, 見當來事, and Weller 1934:58,7: *phyi ma’i mtha’ la rtog cing*. The Tib parallel to the Brahmajāla Sutta thus only takes account of the first of the two terms found in the Pali version, the “thoughts related to the future” (*rtog pa* corresponds to *kappana*, Skt *kalpana*). The Chinese rendering indicates that its Indic original had both terms, although the translator(s) seems to have mistaken *kappika* for *kappa*, Skt *kalpa*, resulting in a reference to “aeons.” (Analayo). On this problem of the meaning of kappa/kalpa, see SD 9 (9c).

⁷³ As Skilling notes, the order found in Pañca-t,taya S, where views on the future precede views on the past, “is unusual, the established tradition in Buddhist literature being past, future, present.” (1997:483 n39)

⁷⁴ The fivefold treatment however also occurs at Vbh 378,16.

⁷⁵ Skilling notes that the Skt prob had similar concluding statements as suggested by the *iyatā* SHT (IV) 33, Frag 6 Ab, which belongs to §11.9 of the Tib tr. (1997:476 n29).

⁷⁶ See Analayo 2011:596.

2.3.6.2 As such, while the Pañca-t,taya Sutta purports—at least in the summary—to deal with the future (*apar'anta*),⁷⁷ the Tibetan translation deals with the views of the three times, as future, past, and present.

2.3.6.3 Furthermore, Skilling (1997:477) notes, the general reference to “recluses and brahmins” in the opening statement of the Tibetan translation (§2.1), is not found in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta until §13, that is, after the views relating to *the future*⁷⁸ have been listed:

Now, bhikshus, those recluses and brahmins who think about the future, devoted to views regarding the future, who claim [declare] numerous theories [dogmas] concerning the future— they all claim these 5 bases [positions] or one of them. [§13]

Again, this resembles the summarized statement on views about *the future* in the Pali Brahma.jāla Sutta (D 1).⁷⁹ [2.2.1]

2.4 BUDDHAGHOSA'S EXPLANATION

2.4.1 Skilling points out that the Tibetan version lists the claims of “nirvana here and now,” not under views about the future, but as *a separate category* (1997: 481, 493). The Brahma.jāla Sutta, on the other hand, places the claims of “supreme nirvana here and now” among the views about the future. According to **Bodhi**, “the arrangement in the Tibetan counterpart seems to be more logical.” (M:ÑB 1307 n937).

2.4.2 This problem regarding the treatment of “nirvana here and now” is recognized by the Pali commentator **Buddhaghosa**, who asks: “Five [positions] are listed in the opening list (*mātikā*), and five are found in the conclusion, but *only four* have been discussed. Where does ‘nirvana here and now’ fit in?”⁸⁰ (MA 4:22 f).

The Majjhima Īkā paraphrases the question: “In the case of ‘nirvana here and now,’ where should it be included? One asks: Since it has not been discussed in its own right, under which of the discussed tenets should it be subsumed?” (MAṬ:Be 2:228).⁸¹

2.4.3 Buddha ghosa replies, “On account of its being unified and being diverse, it should be understood as to be included under both statements”⁸² (MA 4:22), that is, in reference to “conscious survival view” (*saññī,vāda*) [§3.1(4+5); Tib §3.1(3+4)]. The Īkā further explains that “‘Nirvana here and now’ has in fact already been mentioned on its own in the opening summary [§2.1],” and adds, “In concluding, the Blessed One mentions ‘five positions’ [§13] in conformity with the opening summary [§2.1] for the sake of expository elegance (*desanā,vilāsa*) and for the sake of those who are disposed towards being guided (*veneyy'ajjhāsaya*)”⁸³ (MAṬ:Be 2:227 f). [3.3.1]

2.4.4 Scholar and the scholarly might see this as merely a pious or traditional embellishment. While a summary (*uddesa*) is often found in a sutta, the topics listed are then elaborated in the “analysis” (*vibhaṅga*), which usually covers the rest of the sutta. No explanation is given for the incongruence between the summary and the analysis in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, [1.3]

2.5 SKILLINGS' EXPLANATION. In his scholarly critical comparative study of the Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its Tibetan translation, Peter Skilling propose a possible explanation for the problem of the apparent incongruency between the opening summary (*uddesa*) and the rest of the Sutta as analysis (*vibhaṅga*):

⁷⁷ Curiously here, Skilling has “aftertime” (ie the past) (1997:477,1). The Brahma.jāla S here lists 8 grounds for views about “the future,” ie 4 in terms of “form” (as having form, being formless, both, neither), followed by the first 4 view in the opening summary [§2.1].

⁷⁸ Again here Skilling has “aftertime” (ie the past) (1997:477,9): see prec n.

⁷⁹ D 1.3.27/1:38,28 @ SD 25.2. Further, see Analayo 2011:601-603.

⁸⁰ *Imān'eva pañc'āyatanānīti imān'eva pañca kāraṇāni. Iti mātikam ṭhapentena 'pi pañc'eva ṭhapitāni, nigamtena 'pi pañc'eva nigamitāni, bhājentena pana cattāri bhājitāni. Diṭṭha'dhamma'nibbānam kuhiṃ pavīṭṭhan'ti.*

⁸¹ *Itaram pana diṭṭha,dhamma,nibbānam kuhiṃ pavīṭṭham? Sarūpato abhājitattā yathā,bhājitesu vādesu kattha anto,gadhan'ti pucchati.*

⁸² *Ekatta,nānatta,vasena dvīsu padesu pavīṭṭhanti veditabbam.*

⁸³ *Bhagavā attano desanā,vilāsenā veneyy'ajjhāsaya,vasena (catu,cattārīsa aparanta,kappika,vādā tattha tattha anto,gadhā'ti) uddesa,vasena pañc'eva saṅgahetvā yath'uddesaṃ nigamento, imān'eva pañc'āyatanānīti āha.*

A tentative reason for the interpolation of “views relating to the foretime [*pubb’anta*, “the past”] may be suggested. We may posit an earlier recension that dealt only with the five views listed in the *uddeśa*, which were described *en bloc* as “views relating to the aftertime,” as in the Pāli and in agreement with the Pāli and Tibetan versions of the Brahmajāla-sūtra.⁸⁴

In this early version, as in the present version, the last section would have been “nirvana in this lifetime” [our “nirvana here and now”]. In both the Tibetan and the Pāli, each of the four sub-sections of this last section opens with, “Having given up views relating to the foretime, having given up views pertaining to the foretime belonged to an oral commentary on this passage, and that at some point the last was absorbed into the text, whether unconsciously or through the action of a zealous and methodical editor.

The list was placed at the beginning, where it would traditionally be placed as belonging to the past, but was inserted after the section on the annihilationists (§6). This would account for both the interpolation of the section on views about the foretime and the unusual order.⁸⁵

This is only a hypothesis: it is not possible to come to any firm conclusion in the absence of a third witness in the form of a recension of another school. (Skilling 1997:483 f)

2.6 ANALAYO’S EXPLANATION

2.6.1 Comparative survey

2.6.1.1 Building up from Skilling’s hypothesis [2.4], the prolific German scholar monk, **Analayo**, gives a more detailed explanation in his *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya* (2011). Analayo begins his hypothesis by saying that the sequence of the treatment found in the Brahmajāla Sutta (D 1) and its Chinese and Tibetan parallels suggest that an examination of views about the past should precede views about the future.⁸⁶ If we follow the Brahmajāla Sutta’s sequence, perhaps the Pañca-t,aya Sutta section on views about the past [§14-24] should also precede the exposition of views about the future [§§3-13].

2.6.1.2 Analayo’s reasoning is that if we assume that the section on views about the past originally could have stood right at the Sutta’s beginning and might then accidentally have been moved to the wrong place in the course of its transmission, much of the difficulties noted so far could be resolved.

2.6.1.3 This would, however, imply, he continues, that the statement on “the five and the three” was not an introduction to the Sutta as a whole, but only to its examination of views (*ditṭhi*) and thoughts (*kappa*) related to the future [§§2.1, 14]. In fact, this is the case in the Sutta, which specifies the five and the three to be concerned with the future [§2.1]. As an introduction to the Sutta as a whole, notes Analayo, this would not fit, as it does not take into account the sixteen types of view concerned with the past into account (as does the Brahmajāla Sutta).

2.6.1.4 While the general treatment of views in the Pali and the Tibetan versions of the Pañca-t,aya Sutta is relatively similar to the Brahmajāla Sutta and its parallels, the analysis of views about the future into “the five and the three” is a peculiarity of the Pañca-t,aya Sutta⁸⁷ [2.3.4]. This peculiarity has given the Sutta its title in the Pali and the Tibetan versions. References to it in other works also regularly employ the same title.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ In the binary classification into *pūrvānta/aparānta* of the Brahmajāla, *aparānta* or aftertime [the future] means after the present moment: there is no reason why it should not embrace views about later periods within the present lifetime. (Skilling’s fn)

⁸⁵ If the Pali §VI.11 [our §14] belonged to the original recension, it would have to have been placed at the end of the discourse on views (§11) [on clinging, *upādāna*], before the conclusion (§12) [our §25.1]. (Skilling’s fn)

⁸⁶ Skilling indicates (1997:483 n39) says that the order found in the Pañcattaya S, where views on the future precede views on the past “is unusual, the established tradition in Buddhist literature being past, future, present.”

⁸⁷ The fivefold presentation of views recurs in Vbh 378,16.

⁸⁸ Skilling 1997:471 notes several refs to the present Sutta, all of which revolve around the idea of “the five and the three,” such as *lga gsum pa*, *lga dang gsum*, and *lga pa dang gsum pa*. Refs in Chinese works (noted by Skilling 1997:471 and Yinshùn 1962:578) similarly reflect the idea of “five and three,” cf the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, T1442/20.3.662a29 and T1443/23.925c6: 增五增三經, the *Mahāvibhāṣā, T1545/27.660a28: 五三經, and the 大悲經,

2.6.1.5 Sanskrit fragments suggest, however, that the Sutta might also have been known under a different title.⁸⁹ As discourse titles can, at times, be late,⁹⁰ the title “The Five and the Three” could have come into being after the analysis into “five and three” had come to stand at the start of the Sutta. Its earlier title, to a shorter sutta, could have been Pañc’āyatana Sutta, “the Discourse on the Five Bases.” [1.2.1]

2.6.1.6 As such, we can assume that the sequence in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta’s treatment of the various speculations may have been affected during the process of transmission, the Sutta could have originally started with an examination of various views about the past,⁹¹ followed by views about the future. The topic of views about the future would have begun by analysing them into “the five and the three”⁹² [§§14-16], without, however, identifying this analysis as a summary to the whole discourse [1.4.2]. After views on a self that survives after death and views on annihilationism, the discourse would then have continued by examining the dhyanas and mistaken notions of nirvana.

2.6.1.7 In this way, the treatment would have covered the item mentioned as fifth among the “the five and the three,” which is “nirvana here and now.” [§§17-24]. Once this fifth item has been covered, the exposition of views or thoughts related to the future would be concluded, so that at this point the concluding statement to this exposition would come in its right place [§13], followed by the conclusion to the discourse as a whole [§25]. (Analayo 2011:597-599)

2.6.2 Analayo’s reconstruction [2.6.1]

2.6.2.1 For Analayo’s reconstruction to work, he needs to assume that the identification of the introduction to views on the future as the “summary” to the Sutta as a whole [§2.3]: *ayam uddeso pañcattayasasa* [§2.3],⁹³ with its Tibetan counterpart, *lga gsum pa’i chos kyi rnam grangs mdor bstan pa yin no* in Skilling 1994:314,4) does not belong to the original discourse, but was added by the reciters.

2.6.2.2 A similar statement can also be found in three Majjhima suttas, that is, **the Saḷāyatana Sutta** (M 137/3:216,7), **the Uddesa Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 139/3:230,21) and **the Araṇa Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 140/3:239,15). In each of these three instances, the expression *ayam uddeso* is preceded by *iti*, which indicates that the part spoken by the Buddha ends before this remark. That is, the identification of the Buddha’s brief explanation as an *uddesa* to the discourse is a reciter’s remark.

2.6.2.3 The Chinese parallels to these three discourses, MĀ 163 = T1.692c4, MĀ 169 @ T1.701c6, and MĀ 162 @ T1.690b27, do not conclude their corresponding introductory section by identifying it as a summary. This would support the impression that in the case of the Pañca-t,taya Sutta and its Tibetan parallel the remark *ayam uddeso* or *mdor bstan pa yin no* could also be a reciter’s remark added to the discourse at some point during its transmission.

2.6.2.4 Such a remark could only have been added to the Pañca-t,taya Sutta at a time when what Analayo assumes to be the original sequence had already changed and the introduction to views about the future had come to the beginning of the whole discourse. If, on the other hand, we were to take the *uddesa* as part of the original version, then the Pañca-t,taya Sutta should only be concerned with “the five and the three” and not cover views related to the past at all. That is, on following the *uddesa* statement we would need to conclude that the whole exposition on views concerned with the past has been added later.

2.6.2.5 Skilling (1997:483) explores this possibility, suggesting that perhaps “the list of views pertaining to the foretime belonged to an oral commentary on this passage, and that at some point the list was absorbed into the text, whether unconsciously or through the action of a zealous and methodical editor” (cf also Pérez-Remón 1978:82 n46 for a similar suggestion).

T380/12.971b18:五法. The Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, T1435/22.174b19, transcribes it as 般闍提利劍, incorrectly glossed as “Samādhi Sūtra,” 三昧經. (Analayo’s fn)

⁸⁹ See discussion in SHT IV p7 and Schlingloff 1961:34.

⁹⁰ See Analayo 2011:106, 123, 468.

⁹¹ This is the section that begins with §§14-16 (M 2:233,12-235,7).

⁹² See Analayo 2011:598,8.

⁹³ M 102,2.3/2:228,23.

2.6.2.6 Although this fits better with the *uddesa* found in both versions, a problem with his suggestion would be that the Pali and Tibetan versions introduce their examination of the dhyanas and of mistaken notions of nirvana by speaking of relinquishing views about past and about the future. This suggests views about the past to be an integral part of the Pañca-t, taya Sutta's examination. Moreover, the Sutta culminates in presenting supreme liberation as the transcendence of all views. As such transcendence goes beyond views related to past and future, the theme of the discourse receives a comprehensive treatment only when views concerned with the past are also taken into account. (2011:598 n71, standardized)

3 Key terms of the Sutta

3.1 THE 3 PERIODS OF TIME

3.1.1 The phrase *atītānāgata, paccuppana*, “past, future and present,”⁹⁴ is stock, phrased following the rule of the “waxing compound,”⁹⁵ with 3+4+4 syllables. This textual time sequence is also evident in sentences, such as in **the Sampasādanīya Sutta** (D 28), we have *ahu...bhavissati...etarahi vijjati*, “it was (so)...will be...(and) now is” (D 3,100,20). Generally, this is the rule, except in such uncommon cases as *atītam paccuppanam anāgataṃ* (PvA 100,18).

3.1.2 *Apar'anta*

3.1.2.1 The Pañca-t, taya Sutta uses *aparanta* (*apara*, “further, later” + *anta*, “end”) for “future”⁹⁶ [§2.1] and *pubb'anta* (*pubba* “before, earlier” + *anta*, “end”) for “past”⁹⁷ [§2.1]. In both cases, the words are used as nouns, as in the compounds, “devoted to views about the future” (*apar'antānudiṭṭhi*) [§3.1] and “devoted to views about the past” (*pubb'antānudiṭṭhi*)⁹⁸ [§14].

3.1.2.2 In the case of the former, *aparanta* means not only “future” (what is to come), but also the final state of things, such as the end-days (eschatological speculations). The usual word for “future” is *anāgata*. Here the translation, “future,” should be taken to have connotations that include “the hereafter” and “the afterlife,” reflecting the range of the Pañca-t, taya Sutta.

These various “speculations [thoughts] about the future” (*apar'anta, kappa*) [§§3-13] are treated in some detail in **Brahmajāla Sutta** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-57 there.⁹⁹ There are the speculations on the hereafter and the afterlife.

3.1.2.3 Sixteen grounds (ie nos 16-34) deal are those of “conscious survival” (*saññī, vāda*). Two tetrads (grounds 35-38 & 39-42) deal with “non-conscious survival” (*asaññī, vāda*); another two tetrads (grounds nos 43-46 & 47-50), with “neither-conscious-nor-non-conscious survival” (*n'eva, saññī, nāsaññī, vāda*). Seven grounds (nos 51-57) are those of annihilationism (*uccheda, vāda*).¹⁰⁰ [2.3.6]

3.1.2.4 The opening summary (*uddesa*) lists the views as regarding only the future [§2.1]. However, the section on speculations regarding “the future” (*apar'anta*) ends with §13. Then follows the section on speculations about the past [§§14-16]—this is not listed in the *uddesa* [2.3.5]. Then follows section on “thought about nirvana here and now” [§17-24]. The Sutta then closes with two short sections [§§25-26].

3.1.3. The Pali and the Tibetan versions introduce their examination of the dhyanas and views on “nirvana here and now” by saying that views about the past and the future have been “given up” [§17.1].¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ *Atītānāgata, paccuppana*: D 1:137,29 (+DA), 140,24 (~e atthe cintetum), 3:100,24 (~esu arahantesu). 135,4 (~esu dhammesu); M 1:112,3 (~esu cakkhesu viññeyyesu rūpesu), 139,6 (*yam kiñci viññānam ~am*); 234,34 (*rūpaṃ*); S 2:252,18 = 3:47,12 = 187,30 = A 1:284,25 = 2:171,11 etc = Vbh 1,9; Miln 3,28 (gen pl ~ānam), 99,14 (acc pl ~e pāpake akusale dhamme).

⁹⁵ The “waxing compound” rule (das Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder) is a number system of the original syllables of a word, phrase or sentence, such as *atītānāgata, paccuppana* is 3.4.4. See CPD 1;35* & *atītānāgata-paccuppana*, araha, dutiya, etc.

⁹⁶ M 2:31,33 f; S 2:26,33; Kvu 165,36; Vism 599,18.

⁹⁷ M 2:31,33 f; S 2:26,33; Kvu 165,36; Vism 599,18.

⁹⁸ D 1:30,25.

⁹⁹ D 1,75-92 @ SD 25.

¹⁰⁰ D 1.74-92/1:30-36)+ SD 25 esp Table (5.2).

¹⁰¹ Tib version: Skilling 1994:356,8.

The Sutta summary, however, classifies views on “nirvana here and now” as those that related to the future [§2.1]. If views about the future have been given up, why is there any need to deal with future views about nirvana again? The apparent problem here is cleared up with a clarification of the terms “views” and “thoughts [2.3.4].

3.2 DESCRIPTIONS AND NOTIONS OF SELF, SOUL AND CONSCIOUSNESS

3.2.1 *Saññī*

3.2.1.1 BUDDHIST CATEGORIES. Buddhist psychology is well beyond two millennia older than modern psychology, and many of the ancient Indian terms are better understood and used if we accept modern and current terms, but redefining them, where necessary, understanding that we are referring to the Buddhist context. The problem may be real and acute when we try to define or explain a Buddhist term in terms of western categories, or vice versa. Even then, if we are careful and respectful, such a comparison can be instructive.

The term *saññī*, “one who is conscious or percipient,” comes from *saññā*, “perception.”¹⁰² Many scholars have some kind of difficulty regarding the sense or translation of this term, such as in this connection. It helps to remember that often enough the Buddha uses a words in different senses in different contexts. The idea is not to allow our minds to be limited or impeded by words and conceptualization. Words and concepts are tools to help us mentally liberate ourselves, not to be enslaved to them.¹⁰³

As a more detailed study on *saññā* has already been done (SD 17.4), here we shall briefly remark on two key points. Firstly, *saññā*, in the context of the five aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*), is, as a rule, translated as “perception.” Secondly, in the context of the Pañca-ṭtaya Sutta, and similar contexts, especially meditative states, it simply means “consciousness.”

3.2.1.2 *SAÑÑĀ* AS AN AGGREGATE. As the third of the 5 aggregates, *saññā* (from *sañ* = “con” (as in “concentration”) + *ñā*, “to know”) is best translated as “perception,” but sometimes (depending on the context), it has the sense of “consciousness” [3.2.1.3]. It helps to take “perception” as a neologism, that is to say, not to compare it to its counterpart in western psychology.¹⁰⁴

As perception, *saññā* is best understood in relation to “consciousness” (*viññāṇa*). While consciousness is a rudimentary function of the senses—a discriminative experience of the world—perception “discriminates,” that is, “chooses” an experience from that conscious experience to attend to. While *viññāṇa* “cognizes” (knows things), *saññā* “recognizes” an experience (remembers and evaluates it, habitually or instinctually, in terms of past experiences and tendencies).¹⁰⁵

3.2.1.3 *SAÑÑĀ* AS “CONSCIOUSNESS.” The **Pañca-ṭtaya Sutta**, for example, uses the term *saññā* and *saññī* in the context of meditation or psychocosmological, that is, in the context of the “mental spheres” (*āyatana*) of meditation and existence.¹⁰⁶ In such a context, *saññā* functions as “consciousness,” because much of the usual “sensors” of consciousness, the five physical senses (*pañc’indriya*) are missing (that is, temporarily stop functioning) at this profound level of meditation or existence.

3.2.1.4 *ASAÑÑĪ*. The term *asaññī* [§6.2] can be translated as “unconscious” or “non-conscious,” or as “non-percipient,” but the preference is for the simpler and more familiar rendition. *Asaññī* here is found in the name of a unique class of being, the “non-conscious beings” (*asañña,satta*). They are so called because their arise without consciousness (*acitt’uppāda*), their individual forms consist of only pure form (*rūpa,-matt’attabhāva*).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² For a detailed study, see *Saññā*, SD 17.4. See also Ruegg’s scholarly insight (1995:146 f).

¹⁰³ On some of the difficulties scholars face here, see eg Skilling 1997:477 n39.

¹⁰⁴ As Ruegg notes, *saññā* is one of the “fundamental terms and concepts in Buddhist thought for which no philosophically adequate translation has yet been agreed” (1995:146 f & n1). See Ruegg 1973 n2 for an excellent essay on *saññā* that includes a commentarial survey. See also Skilling 1997:477 n31.

¹⁰⁵ On perception, see *Saññā*, SD 17.4 esp (2).

¹⁰⁶ On *āyatana* as “mind-base,” see (*Āsava-k,khaya*) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36) @ SD 33,8 (2.2). On *āyatana* as “sense-base,” ie sense-faculty, see eg **Saḷ-āyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137/3:216-222), SD 29.5.

¹⁰⁷ The non-conscious beings (*asana,satta*) are located in the 4th-dhyana heavens just below the Pure Abodes (*suddh’āvāsa*). Here, “**non-conscious**” is preferred as a technical term (referring to a class of beings) rather than “uncon-

In other words, when *saññā* is used in the names of the mental realms or spheres, it refers to consciousness in its entirety, namely, the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*n'eva,saññā,nāsaññāyatana*), and the non-conscious beings (*asaññā,satta*). In both cases, *saññā* does not refer to perception alone, but also to all the other aspects of consciousness. Since “consciousness” and “percipiency” as used in the early suttas mostly refer to the same thing, it helps to use the easier and more familiar term, “consciousness,” and “conscious.”

3.2.2 *Aroga* [§§3, 4.1, 5, 6, 8-10]

3.2.2.1 The word *aroga*—the most common term in the Sutta—comes from *na*, “not” + *roga*, “sickness,” and literally means “not-sickness,” that is, “health.” Here, however, it has the secondary sense or connotation of “unimpaired, intact” throughout, and the Commentaries gloss it as “permanent, enduring” (*nicca*), which is of its synonym.¹⁰⁸ *Aroga*, in this sense, is often but only used in reference to the speculative notions of an abiding self or soul, such as often mentioned in the early texts, especially **the Brahma-jāla Sutta** (D 1), **the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta** (D 9), **the Pañca-t,taya Sutta** (M 102), **the Saṃyutta Nikāya** (S 24.37-44), **the Sutta Nipāta** and **the Vibhaṅga**.¹⁰⁹

3.2.2.2 In **the Upasīva Māṇavaka Pucchā** (Sn 5.7) of the Sutta Nipāta, for example, the brahmin youth Upasīva asks the Buddha,

*Atthaṅgato so uda vā so n'atthi
udāhu va sassatiyā arogo
tam me muni sādhu viyākarohi
tathā hi te vidito esa dhammo*

He who has passed on, is he no more,
or is he eternal and intact [unimpaired]?
It is good if you answer me this, O sage:
for thus is the teaching known to you. (Sn 1075)

3.2.2.3 Views regarding the abiding soul are very common during the Buddha’s time, just as some religions today, too, purport the existence of some kind of “eternal soul.” The Buddha rejects any kind of notion of anything as being eternal to be untenable. The reason is clear, simple and natural: *whatever exists must exist in time*, and what exists in time is necessarily impermanent. Whatever that is said to exist “out of time” or “beyond time” (such as an eternal being) is simply a mental construction, an imagining. While such a notion may have its uses, such a notion must ultimately be left where it really is—in the mental realm, the human imaginings.¹¹⁰

3.2.3 *Viññāna,kasina* [§3.2]¹¹¹

3.2.3.1 In its list of conscious or percipient selves, the Pañca-t,taya Sutta mentions the “consciousness kasina” (*viññāna,kasina*), which is said to be “boundless and imperturbable” (*appamāṇam āneñjam*), which qualifies it as a formless sphere.¹¹² The consciousness-kasina occurs regularly in the Pali suttas in a list of 10 “kasina spheres” *kaṣiṇ'āyatana*.¹¹³ There is also the alternative expression “consciousness sphere *kṛtsna*,” *viññāna(nam,tyāyatana,kṛtsna)*, occurs.¹¹⁴

scious” which refers simply to any being that is not conscious (say, asleep or unconscious). Their life-span is 500 aeons (Vbh 1028/425); ie, they live for a maximum of 500 aeons (DAṬ 1:219 f), and they fall away with the arising of a single thought [§68] (DA 1:118).

¹⁰⁸ DA 119; MA 4:16; SnA 1:595.

¹⁰⁹ D 1,82/1:33,10 @ SD 25.2; D 9,34/1:192+36/1:193+38/1:195 @ SD 7.14; M 102,2.1-11/2:228-232 passim @ SD 40a.12; S 24.37-44/3:218-220 & repeat cycles (Rūpi,attā S, Arūpi,atta S, Adukkam-asukha S, etc) in Dīṭṭhi Saṃyutta (S 3:218-224); Vbh 378,16-23 *pañca dīṭṭhiyo*, 388,19-989,4 *aṭṭha asaññī,vāda*, 389,5-22 *n'eva,saññī nāsaññī,vāda*; Suddh'aṭṭhaka S (Sn 788a), Upasīva Māṇava Pucchā (Sn 1075b) see here. See PTC 253: aroga.

¹¹⁰ On the problems related to *imagining, speculating, etc*, see **Avyākata S** (A 7.54) @ SD 40a.11 (3.2). Also see A Wezler (ed), *L Alsdorf, Kleine Schriften*, Wiesbaden. 1974:307; Skilling 1997:480 f.

¹¹¹ This section is based mainly on **Analayo** 2011:592 n33.

¹¹² See SD 17.8a (10.4). For a study, see **Āneñja Sappāya S** (M 106/2:261-166), SD 85.13.

¹¹³ D 33/3:268,25, 34/3:290,16, M 77/2:15,1, A 10.25/5:46,8, and A 10.29/5:60,21. A 1.20/1:41,23 also lists the consciousness kasina, but without saying it is a *kaṣiṇ'āyatana*. A 10.26/5:47,15 speaks of the “attainment of consciousness kasina” (*viññāna,kasina,samāpatti*). Its parallel, **SĀ 549 @ T2.143a25**, speaks of the “consciousness kasina sphere, 識一切入處, corresponding to the expression *viññāna,kṛtsn'āyatana* mentioned in the Mahā,vyutpatti (Mvyut

The Tibetan version speaks of the *sphere* of infinite consciousness (*rnam shes mtha' yas skye mched*; Skt *viññānānamtyāyatana*).¹¹⁵ This is, in fact, confirmed by the Pali commentary, which explains that the consciousness-kasina here refers to the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇaṅc'āyatana*, MA 4:18,-7).¹¹⁶ The Aṅguttara Commentary, however, explains that *viññāṇa,kaṣiṇa* refers to the object, not in relation to the attainment itself, since the development of the consciousness-kasina takes infinite consciousness as the object and thereby reaches the sphere of infinite consciousness (AA 2:77,4).

3.2.3.2 **The Attha,sālinī** (Dhamma,saṅgaṇī Commentary) explains that the consciousness-kasina is not included in the exposition of kasinas because it belongs to *the development of the formless attainments* (DhsA 186,16). **The Netti-p,paḥaraṇa** associates the space-kasina and the consciousness-kasina with the realm of insight (*vipassanā*), while the other eight kasinas are “calm” (*samatha*) meditation objects (Nett 89,26).

Buddhaghosa, in his **Visuddhi,magga**, gives detailed explanations of the kasinas,¹¹⁷ but does not mention the consciousness-kasina, although it occurs in a list of objects for direct knowledge (*abhiññā*).¹¹⁸ The reason that **Analayo** gives for the absence of the consciousness-kasina in the Visuddhi,magga's treatment is that it “may rather be that, once the expression *kaṣiṇa* is taken to stand for a particular meditation device, it becomes difficult to imagine what a consciousness *kaṣiṇa* might be” (2011:592 n33).

3.2.3.3 An Shigao's (安世高) translation of the Dasōttara Sūtra speaks merely of the “consciousness kasina,” T13/1.241b7: 識普, further qualified as “pervasive above and below, non-dual, and immeasurable,” 上下遍不二無有量. These different renderings highlight the close relationship between the all-pervasive nature of the attainment of the sphere of infinite consciousness and *kaṣiṇa* (Skt *kṛtsna*) in the sense of a “totality.”¹¹⁹

This not only corroborates the similarity in meaning between the expressions “sphere of infinite consciousness” and “consciousness kasina,” “but also indicates that in the early texts, *kaṣiṇa* or *kṛtsna* stood for the all-pervasive totality that characterizes such experiences, for developing of which the meditation devices described in the Commentaries are merely the tools.

3.2.3.4 **Tilmann Vetter** comments that “in the Visuddhi,magga, we no longer find that a Kasina sphere is considered as being immeasurable or boundless. It is even characteristic of the technique that one first concentrates on a limited piece of clay (a smooth disk), a limited amount of water (in a saucer), etc., and by starting from this one passes through various stages of dhyana. Infinity only becomes a topic when one has reached the fourth stage of dhyana by this method and wishes to go on to the spheres of meditation which are devoid of all visible form. Infinity is only associated with space and perception.

Each of the ten Kasinas is now employed to generate dhyana. Therefore, the Visuddhimagga is consistent in substituting the last two instances of the old Kasina series, space and perception, by concentration on (a limited amount of) light and a limited space.” (1988:66 f)¹²⁰

3.2.3.5 The Tibetan translation is helpful here. At §4.2, where the Pañca-t,taya Sutta has “the sphere of nothingness” (*ākāṅcaññāyatana*, M 2:230,2), the Tibetan has its equivalent of *ci yang med pa'i skye mched*).¹²¹ In view of the use of “sphere” (*skye mched*) here in all versions, the Tibetan version's earlier usage of “sphere” in connection with consciousness seems to conform more with the rest of the text than

1538 in Sakaki 1926:123). **MĀ 215 @** T1.800b7 (parallel to A 10:29) and **Saṅgīti,paryāya**, T1.536/26.447b9, present the “consciousness *kaṣiṇa*,” 識遍, as the tenth of the “*kaṣiṇa* spheres,” 一切處 or 遍處.

¹¹⁴ Eg. in SHT 3:915R3 (p171), the restoration is corroborated by the immediately preceding (*ākāṣānam*)[*t*]yāyatana,*kṛtsnam*). See also fragment X 679V4 in Stache-Rosen 1968:34 and fragment 689R3 in Schlingloff 1962a:14.

¹¹⁵ Skilling 1994:316,1: *rnam shes mtha' yas skye mched*; cf also SHT IV 32 folio 1R4, which reads *v[i]jñān[ā]-nam[t]ya*.

¹¹⁶ On *viññāṇaṅc'āyatana*, see **Viññāṇaṅc'āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.6/4:266 f), SD 24.16.

¹¹⁷ Vism ch 4/118-177, quoting Pm 1:6,30.

¹¹⁸ Vism 20.11/609,15

¹¹⁹ Cf also Barnes 1981:248, who highlights the basic meaning of *kaṣiṇa* or *kṛtsna* as “‘whole’ or ‘entire’.”

¹²⁰ See also Analayo 2009t and Wynne 2007:31-34.

¹²¹ Skilling 1994:318,3; see also DĀ (Skt) fragment 300v4-5.

the Pali version's reference to with the consciousness-“kasina,” that is, if this has the sense of a *type* of meditation or a meditation *device*.

However, as we noted above [3.2.3.2-4], the term, “consciousness-kasina (*viññāṇa,kasīṇa*), as used in our Sutta here is its original early meaning, referring not to a meditation method or device, but to a formless attainment, that is, the attainment of boundless consciousness (*akiñcaññ'āyatana*). This is confirmed in both the Tibetan and the Sanskrit parallels, and also in other related sutras in these languages and Chinese .

3.2.4 Fear and disgust on account of self-identity [§12.2]

3.2.4.1 *UDDHAM,SARĀ ĀSATTI* [§11.5]. The “fear on account of self-identity” (*sakkāya,bhaya*) and the “disgust on account of self-identity” (*sakkāya,parijegucchā*)¹²² are aspects of the craving for non-existence (*vibhāva,tanḥā*). The annihilationist view, to which it gives rise, involves an identification with self, a self that is annihilated at death. How does this fear arise? This is suggested in the phrase “**attachment to the flowing on into a new life**” (*uddham,sarā āsatti*) [§11.5].

Here *uddham,sarā* is resolved as *uddha*, “up, upstream, on(wards), further” + *sarā*, “flowing, moving on.” It refers to samsara (cyclic life), especially rebirth, future life or lives. It is found only in compounds, such as *uddham,sarāsatti* or, as a phrase, ~ *āsattim*, meaning “attachment to rebirth” here¹²³ [§11.5]. The Sutta commentary explains: “The doctrine of a future round of life is said to be *uddha*, meaning that it flows along with a doctrine of a future life-cycle” (*uddham saran'ti uddham vuccati anāgata,samsāra,-vādo, anāgataṃ saṃsāra,vādaṃ sarantīti attho*, MA 4:21.18).¹²⁴

3.2.4.2 THE PARABLE OF THE TRADER [§§12.2-3]. The text of the section on the “annihilation of the self” [§§11-13] is rather tricky. We need to carefully understand who is criticizing whom, and to whom the parables refer. Contextually, it is clear that the first parable—that of the trader—refers to *the critics of the annihilationists*, while the second—the parable of the dog leashed to a post—figures *the annihilationists* themselves. A vital clue here is that the phrase of “fear” [§12.2] appears only in reference to the annihilationists, not to their critics (who apparently are eternalists).¹²⁵

The Pañca-t,taya Sutta says **the annihilationists** assert various notions of self-annihilation after death (the non-survival of the soul) [§§11.1-4]. Some other recluses and brahmins (the eternalists), rejecting the notions of self-annihilation, instead proclaim the doctrine of a “new life” after death, understandably a better one in heaven: They “proclaim their attachment to the flowing on into a new life, proclaiming: ‘After death, we will be thus! After death we will be thus!’” [§11.5]

With some wry humour, the Buddha retorts that such a notion is like a trader, who negotiates thus, “Just like a trader, when trading, goes ‘By this, that will be mine! With this I will get that!’” [§11.6]. This is a kind of “behaviourist” attitude towards religion: if I believe in this (say, faith in a creator-God), I get that (say, a place in some heaven). This is like a business deal on a cosmic or theological scale!

The problem with such a religious notion is that we have only two choices: either we believe or we don't: we are *rewarded* if we do, we are *punished* if we don't. The reality is that it is Hobson's choice: we do not really have a choice. We have to “choose” to believe (in the official teaching or whatever we are told): “You are either with us or against us.”¹²⁶ This gives us a good idea of the eternalist view (*sassata,-ditṭhi*).

3.2.4.3 THE PARABLE OF THE DOG LEASHED TO A POST. **The Pañca-t,taya Sutta** (M 102) and **the Gaddula Sutta 1** (S 22.99) have a similar dog simile. One who takes any of the aggregates as self¹²⁷

¹²² *Parijegucchā* = *pari* (“(all) around, completely,” here “intense”) + *jegucchā* (adj “detested, despised,” sec der of *jigucchā* (n)). This suggests its being strongly rooted in hate.

¹²³ M 2:232,15; cf Sn 777, 901; Nm 315,13 f.

¹²⁴ See CPD: *uddham-sarā*.

¹²⁵ On eternalism, see SD 25.1 (5.1A). **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1) treats “speculators about the past” (*pubb'anta,kappika*) as being eternalists (of 2 kinds, complete eternalists and partial eternalist): see D 1.30-52/1:13-22 @ SD 25.2.

¹²⁶ See **Three Roots Inc** @ SD 31.12 (2.2).

¹²⁷ See **Samanupassanā S** (S 22.4/3:46 f), SD 26.12, where see Intro (1) on the 4 basic modes of self-identity view in connection with the aggregates totalling 20 self-views.

would run around in a circle like “a dog bound by a leash tied to a strong pillar or post. It would just keep going, running around that same pillar or post.”¹²⁸ However, the meanings of the similes are reversed.

The Saṃyutta Commentary says that the uninstructed worldling is like the dog, his wrong view is like the leash, his personal identity (*sakkāya*) is like the pillar or post. The worldling running around due to his self-identity, bound by craving and views, is like the dog’s running around leashed to the pillar or post (self-identity) (SA 2:327). The Majjhima Commentary differs slightly in saying that craving is the leash, and that his view is like a rod applied to the dog (MA 4:22).

In the Pañca-t, taya Sutta, the parable refers to the annihilationists themselves, who out of fear of future shock and pain, proclaim the annihilation of the self or soul with their bodily death. This is a common materialist view, where the soul is seen as being identical with the body.¹²⁹ So when the body dies, the soul perishes, too.¹³⁰

3.2.4.4 IDENTITY-ROOTED FEAR. The Sutta says that the annihilationists cling to the notion of annihilationism “out of *fear* for their self-identity, on account of *disgust* at their self-identity, and they keep running around and circling around just this self-identity” [§12.2]. So here we have two negative emotions: fear (*bhaya*) and disgust (*parijegucchā*) for self-identity (*sakkāya*),¹³¹ which is essentially our identifying with our bodies.

Such a self-identification is problematic on two levels: the physical and the mental. **Physically**, our body is nothing but a volatile assemblage of the four elements: earth, water, fire and wind. Simply put, we are made up of solid parts (such as hair, bones, teeth, skin), liquid (more than three-quarters of our body), heat (which is really our metabolic and decaying processes), and wind (our body movements and the gases in our body). All these four elements are the same as the external elements: they are in an on-going process of exchange and transfer, and are as such impermanent. Not understanding this basic fact of nature, we are likely to *fear* such changes and uncertainty.¹³²

Mentally and psychologically, our identification with our body is more subtle yet very profound. This self-identification begins with the awareness of others as being apart and different from us, that is, our bodies.¹³³ Our languages only reinforce this self-identification—especially the personal pronouns, “I,” “me” and “mine.” Our failure to understand that *the word is not the thing*¹³⁴ only reinforces our identifying and being attached to our bodies (and minds). The roots of such a fear is our own attachment to our bodies, minds and self-images, and our craving to “better” them, that is, feed them with ever more pleasurable stimuli.¹³⁵ Essentially, this identity-rooted fear is *the fear of death*, or at least of *losing* what we are clinging to, especially physical things and experiences.¹³⁶

3.2.4.5 IDENTITY-ROOTED DISGUST. While identity-rooted *fear* is that of death and of loss, identity-rooted disgust (*sakkāya parijegucchā*) is the negative emotions related to “to be with the unpleasant, to be

¹²⁸ M 102.12/2:232 f; S 22.99/3:150.

¹²⁹ This is the notion, “The self is the same as the body” (*taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ*); see **Avyākata S** (A 7.54/4:67-70) @ SD 40a,11 (1).

¹³⁰ On doctrines of annihilationism, see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), SD 25.3 (VII) & **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.21-23/-1:55), SD 8.10. On the moral problems of annihilationism, see **Anusaya**, SD 31.3 (7.2).

¹³¹ See **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44), where *sakkāya* is said to refer to the 5 aggregates (M 44.2/1:299). On *sakkāya = atta, bhāva* (with refs) @ SD 17.8a (5.2.4). See parable in **Āsivisôpama S** (S 35.238.5/4:173), SD 28.1. On *sakkāya, -ditthi*, see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8 (3).

¹³² On the 4 elements, see **Mahā Hatthi, padôpama S** (M 28), SD 6.16(2).

¹³³ For a description of such a process, using mythical language, see eg **Aggañña S** (D 27.26n/3:88), SD 2.19; using psychological language, **Saññoga S** (A 7.48/4:57-59), SD 8.7.

¹³⁴ See eg **Self and selves**, SD 26.9 esp (2.2.2).

¹³⁵ On understanding such a process and overcoming craving, see **Nimitta and vyañjana**, SD 19.14.

¹³⁶ Technically, this refers to the suffering arising from an identifying with any of the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k, khandha*), or “suffering due to formations” (*sankhāra, dukkhatā*): see SD 1.1 (4.1+6.1), SD 17.6 (6.2+8).

without the pleasant, not to get what one desires.”¹³⁷ Technically, this is, this is the “suffering due to change” (*vipariṇāma, dukkhatā*).¹³⁸

The spiritually positive term for “disgust” is *nibbidā*, meaning a total rejection of the bad or unwholesome, having well understood what they are capable of.¹³⁹ However, here, in the case of the annihilationist, it is often raw hatred, a fervent, even compulsive, desire to annihilate the opponent or unbeliever, even at the risk of self-destruction.

In the case of someone who sees himself as a personal failure, he might have a similar feeling of self-destruction. This tendency is rooted in the craving for non-existence (*vibhava, taṇha*), a kind of death-wish or desire “to end it all,” that is, a craving for annihilation in a materialist as well as a spiritual sense. This is the wrong view of annihilationism (*uccheda, diṭṭhi*), which can range from a wish to destroy ourselves by suicide or euthanasia, thinking that we would abandon the self, or (in the case of God-believers) by way of mass destruction and religious suicide, hoping for a place in paradise or to merge in companionship with a supreme reality (like God or Brahman).

If we are overwhelmed by a sense of guilt or personal impurity, we might try to deny it. Yet, despite our denial, indeed *because* we deny it, we become more entrenched in the idea, and so reinforce the fear. The late colourful philosopher monk Nāṇavīra explains: “Any attempt I make to abolish my existence tacitly confirms it, for it is my existence that I am seeking to abolish.” (1987:81). Another example is when, out of fear or hate of a certain religion, we regularly lose ourselves in its scriptures, looking for falsities and loopholes, and fervently exposing them at every opportunity. Ironically, we end up knowing more about that faith instead of mastering the suttas and inner stillness. In the end, we might find ourselves not benefiting from either side. These are manifestations of the annihilationist view.¹⁴⁰

3.3 NIRVANA

3.3.1 “Nirvana here and now” [§§17-24]

3.3.1.1 The location of this section, as we have noted, is problematic [2.3.4.1]. Skilling points out that **the Pañca, traya Sūtra**, the Tibetan version of Pañca-t, taya S, lists the claims of “nirvana here and now,” not under views about the future, but as a separate category (1997: 493). **The Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), on the other hand, places the claims of “supreme nirvana here and now” among the views about the future. According to **Bodhi**, “the arrangement in the Tibetan counterpart seems to be more logical.” (M:ÑB 1307 n937).

The tetrad of the “doctrine of nirvana here and now” (*diṭṭha, dhamma, nibbāna, vāda*) are treated in **the Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), as the grounds for wrong view nos 58-62.¹⁴¹ Ground no 58, the view that “the self enjoys sense-pleasures” is inherent in each of the speculations here [§§17.2, 19,2, 21,2], and grounds nos 59+60 have been conflated as the 1st speculation here [§§17-18].

3.3.1.2 The commentary on the Mūla, pariyāya Sutta (M 1) says that there are 5 kinds of “supreme nirvana here and now” (*parama, diṭṭha, dhamma, nibbāna*, as it is called there), of the 62 bases of wrong views listed in **the Brahma, jāla Sutta** (D 1), that is, nirvana identified with the total enjoyment of sense-pleasures or with each of the 4 dhyanas (*jhāna*).¹⁴² This treatment is basically the same as that found in the Pañca-ṭ, taya Sutta [§§17-24]. (MA 1:38)

The notion of “nirvana here and now” is a misconception that the highest good is attainable in our present mundane situation or activities or they actually constitute nirvana itself—as sort of “samsara is nirvana, nirvana is samsara” view, or “enlightenment is in what we are doing now,” even in sensual plea-

¹³⁷ **Dhamma, cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,5/5:421), SD 1.1.

¹³⁸ This set forms the 2nd kind of suffering of 3, stated in **Dukkha S** (S 38.14/4:259), SD 1.1(4.1); also S 45.165/-5:56; D 3:216. See also SD 1.1 (4.1).

¹³⁹ See *Nibbidā*, SD 20.1.

¹⁴⁰ On the arising and ending of self-identity, see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 102.2-5/1:299), SD 40a.9.

¹⁴¹ D 1,93-100/1:36-39) + SD 25 esp Table (5.2).

¹⁴² D 1,3.19-25/1:36-38.

sure themselves.¹⁴³ This is a reductionist view, an oversimplification, of the goal of the spiritual life: the means is taken to be the ends, where philosophy has overshadowed, even ousted, spirituality.

The same commentary attributes such a wrong view as being due to craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and views (*diṭṭhi*). Craving causes us to enjoy a state we perceive as “nirvana” or “enlightenment,” or to lust after it. Conceit causes us to pride ourselves as having attained such a state, or to define it and treat it as a religious status or lineage that can be transmitted from teacher to pupil. Views makes us conceive of this illusory nirvana to be permanent, pleasurable and eternal (an abiding self). (MA 1:38 f).

3.3.2 “Regards” (*samanupassati*) [§§23.3, 24.3+6]. As noted here, the verb *samanupassati*, “he regards (or considers),” appears thrice in the Sutta, all in the same connection, that is, of misconceiving nirvana as being “here and now”: “(he) regards thus: ‘I’ve attained peace! I’m cooled [attained nirvana]! I’m without clinging!’” [§§23.3, 24.3+6]. The word *samanupassati* is resolved as *sam* (complete) + *anu* (after) + *passati* (“he sees”), that is, to look at something in a sustained and intense way. The general idea here is that it involves some kind of protracted examination or thinking, and forming views or coming to a decisive conclusion as a result.

Such a “regarding” can either be negative or unhelpful (as used in this Sutta) or intuitively (with wisdom).¹⁴⁴ It is helpful here to study **the Samanupassanā S** (S 22.47), which explains how the five aggregates can be improperly “regarded” so that it leads to various kinds of wrong views.¹⁴⁵

3.4 DESCRIPTION OF MEDITATIVE STATES.

3.4.1 Form, formless, both, neither [§§3-10]. This speculative tetrad¹⁴⁶ relating to the two spheres of dhyana meditation are listed in the first 3 of 4 sets of “speculations about the future” [§§2-10]. They are treated as the 16 grounds (nos 16-34) for views regarding “conscious survival,” that is, the false beliefs in a self or soul that survives death or is eternal. [2.2.2]

As word “form” (*rūpī*) is part of a tetrad that speculates on the after-death state of a being, it probably does not refer to “form” of the sense-world, but to dhyana states. The Commentary, however, explains the term *rūpī* itself as meaning “karmic body” (*karaja, rūpa*, literally “deed-born form”)¹⁴⁷ (MA 4:17), and *rūpa, saññī* as “of the four form-realms” (*catasso rūpāvacara, saññā*, MA 4:18).

3.4.2 Unified and diversified [§§3-10]. These two terms are found in the same set as the previous one [3.4.1] describing the state of a self or soul surviving after death [eg §3(5+6)]. In early Buddhist cosmology, “**unified consciousness**” (*ekatta, saññā*) refers to the brahmas of the 2nd and the 4th dhyanas, and the beings of the subhuman realms (asuras, pretas, animals, and hell-beings), and “**diverse consciousness**,” to the brahmas of the 1st and the 3rd dhyanas, the devas of the sense-worlds, humans and some beings of the subhuman realms.¹⁴⁸

The commentarial tradition, however, take *ekatta, saññā*, meaning that the self is of uniform consciousness [single perception] (*ekatta, saññī*), pertains to one who gains the meditative attainments. This usually refers not only to one who has gained an attainment (namely, the 1st dhyana), but to anyone who perceives the attainment as being unified or gains profound mental focus.

Similarly, the Dīgha Subcommentary understands *nān’atta, saññā*, meaning that the self is of diversified consciousness, as referring to the non-attainers. However, anyone who has one or more of the eight attainments,¹⁴⁹ who perceives the attainment in a diversified way is also included here.¹⁵⁰ (DAṬ 1:224)

¹⁴³ According to **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), this is the ground for view no 58 (D 1.3.20/1:36), qu at MA 1:38,27.

¹⁴⁴ D 1:69, 73, 2:198; M 1:435 f, 2:205; S 3:42.

¹⁴⁵ S 22.47/3:46 f), SD 26.12.

¹⁴⁶ Such a form-based tetrad is rare. The more common tetrad or tetralemma is that of exist, not exist, both and neither, found in many places in the Canon: see eg **Avyākata S** (A 7.54/4:67-70), SD 40a.11.

¹⁴⁷ Comy to **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1) uses the term *karaja, kāya*, “karmic body or deed-born body,” which is synonymous (DA 1:113 = Bodhi 1978:166). See **Karaja, kāya Brahma, vihāra S** (A 10.208/5:299-301), SD 2.10.

¹⁴⁸ For details, see **Viññāna-ṭṭhiti**, SD 23.14 esp Table 3. See **Satta Viññāna-ṭṭhiti S** (A 7.41 = A:B 7.44/4:39 f), SD 96.5 & its comy (AA 4:25-28); also DA 2:509-511.

¹⁴⁹ That is, the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments.

¹⁵⁰ Cf DA 2:510 (on *brahma, kāyika*); MA 1:37 (on *ekattā* and *nanattā*). On the Abhidhamma “methods” (*naya*) of *ekatta, naya* and *nānatta, naya*, see DAṬ 1:258 = Bodhi 1978:192; VbhA 198 = AbhA:M 1:242 f; also SD 25.3 (49.2).

In the **(Anuruddha) Upakkilesa Sutta** (M 128), the Buddha tells Anuruddha that he (the Buddha) has understood what “diversified consciousness” (*nan’atta,saññā*), amongst other things, is, and has given it up. In that way, he progresses in his meditation, resulting in his awakening.¹⁵¹

3.4.3 Limited, boundless, imperturbable [§3.1(7-9)]

3.4.3.1 LIMITED CONSCIOUSNESS [§§3.1(7), 4.1(7), 14(11), 16.1(11)]. This is a triad of terms related to meditation, specifically the formless attainments. This is clear from the use of the term *kaṣiṇa* [3.2.3], which here is a term for the experience of a formless attainment. The term *paritta saññī*, referring to a self of limited consciousness (*paritta,saññī*) refers to one who uses a limited kasina, is found in ground for view no 29. According to the Majjhima Tīkā (Subcommentary), this may mean that the self is conscious or percipient, as in the case of views that “the self is the size of a thumb, or the size of a grain of corn, or is a mere atom,” like Kapila, Kaṇāda,¹⁵² etc. (DAṬ 1:224)

3.4.3.2 BOUNDLESS CONSCIOUSNESS [§§3.1(8), 4.1(8), 14(12), 16.1(12)]. The notion of a self that is of boundless consciousness (*appamāṇa,saññī*), according to the Dīgha Subcommentary, refers to one who uses an extended kasina. This is the ground of those who view that the self is immanent or all-pervasive (*sabba,gata,bhāva*)¹⁵³ (DAṬ 1:224). It forms the ground for view no 30 in the Brahma.jāla Sutta (D 1).

This is another term which the commentarial tradition explains in the context of own times, that is, at least a couple of centuries after the Buddha’s times, when meditation in the monasteries (where the Commentaries and Subcommentaries were written) were more formalized, and making use of such external devices as the kasina disc and so on.¹⁵⁴ [3.4.3.3]

3.4.3.3 IMPERTURBABLE CONSCIOUSNESS [§§3.2, 4.2, 14.12, 15.12]. Usually, the term “boundless” (*appamāṇa*) refers to dhyanas attained through the 4 divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*),¹⁵⁵ and the “imperturbable” (*aneñja*) refers to the 4 formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*).¹⁵⁶ However, it is likely that in this Sutta, the “consciousness kasina” (*viññāṇa,kaṣiṇa*)—which is said to be “boundless and imperturbable” [§3.2]—retains its ancient meaning of “the sphere of infinite consciousness” (*viññāṇaṇc’āyatana*) (MA 4:18,7), in which case, both the terms, “boundless and imperturbable” (*appamāṇam aneñjam*) would refer to that sphere (*āyatana*) [3.2.3], as well any of the formless spheres [3.4.3.4].

3.4.3.4 THE SPHERE OF NOTHINGNESS [§4.2]. The formless sphere of nothingness (*ākāṅkhaññ’āyatana*),¹⁵⁷ mentioned only once [§4.2] in the Sutta, is said to be “boundless and imperturbable,” but it is still said to be “**conditioned and gross**” (*saṅkhatam oḷārikam*) [§4.3; 3.11]. “**Conditioned**” (*saṅkhatta*) means that this state arises on account of condition, and are, as such, impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self. “**Gross**” (*oḷārika*) means, in simple terms, that such a state is sense-based, still essentially, albeit very refined, body-based experienced, not a freely highly refined and utterly blissful mental experience, like dhyana.¹⁵⁸

This means that this state (and all meditation states) are mind-made and “not the real thing”—the spiritual journey is not yet finished; the goal (liberation) has not yet been attained.¹⁵⁹ In the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, the phrase “conditioned and gross” also means that the states that the recluses and brahmins claim to have attained are not even the actual states as defined by the Buddha. They are all tainted and limited by

¹⁵¹ M 128,30/3:162 @ SD 5.18; qu in ItA 2:137 f.

¹⁵² Kapila (fl 550 BCE?) was a Vedic sage and founder of the Sāṅkhya school, and Kaṇāda (c 100-300), author of the Vaiśeṣika,sūtras and the Vaiśeṣika system. These are two of the orthodox schools (*darśana*) of Indian philosophy.

¹⁵³ “Most likely the Vedāntins are meant.” (Bodhi 1978:189 n2)

¹⁵⁴ See Intro (2.2) on §4+n; also (3.2.3.5). On such a kasina meditation, see see Thitapuñño, “Colour-kasina meditation”: [download](#). See *Bhāvanā*, SD 15.1 (9.2). On the 4 colour *kaṣiṇa* meditations, see *Mahā Parinibbāna S* (D 16.3,29-32/2:110 f), SD 9). On *viññāṇa kaṣiṇa*, see SD 40a.12 (3.2.3). See also *Viññāṇa*, SD 17.8a (4.1).

¹⁵⁵ See *Brahma,vihāra*, SD 38.5.

¹⁵⁶ See *Samadhi* @ SD 24.11 (5).

¹⁵⁷ *Ākāṅkhaññ’āyatana*. See *Ākāṅkhaññ’āyatana Pañha S* (S 40.7), SD 24.17. On Ālāra Kālāma’s experience, see *Ariya Pariyesanā S* (M 16,15.2), SD 1.11.

¹⁵⁸ Technically, *oḷārika* means “that which impinges (the physical senses, internal and external; with touch, viz, earth, wind, fire)”: see SD 17.a (3.2).

¹⁵⁹ See (*Pañcāla,caṇḍa*) *Sambādha S*, SD 33.2.

the notion of an abiding self or soul¹⁶⁰ [3.11]. Such a state is unsatisfactory because the person would miss the experience when it is gone, and is attached and dependent on it as some kind of “religious” or “spiritual” experience, when they are really not (since they are still body-based), that they are still “fettered with sensuality” [§17-22].

What is the Buddha’s view of such a state, then? Within the base of infinite consciousness, lies the base of nothingness. As we maintain a constant focus on the infinite consciousness, the consciousness begins to disappear. This leaves behind only the *infinity*, that is, of “nothingness” (*ākiñcañña*). Only in letting go of the perception of infinite consciousness can we proceed to the next level. Otherwise, we could remain stuck in that particular state: what is meant to free us becomes a noose, a fetter, holding us back. Dhyana, in short, is about *supreme letting go*—until there is *nothing* more to let go of. This is true renunciation. Then we are ready for liberation.¹⁶¹

3.5 THE PEAKS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND EXISTENCE [§4.2, 6.2, 8]

3.5.1 The 4 peaks (*agga*)

3.5.1.1 The Pañca-t,taya Sutta, at one point, speaks of the sphere of nothingness [§§4-5] as “the supreme peak of perfectly pure consciousness” (*saññānaṃ parisuddhā paramā aggā anuttariyā*) [§4.2]. This *saññā’agga* is referred to in the suttas as the “peak of perception,” such as in **the Agga Sutta 2** (A 4.75), which actually consists of two suttas (as found in the PTS edition). Both these suttas are translated here:

SD 40a.12(3.5a)

Agga Sutta 1¹⁶²

Paṭhama Agga Sutta The First Discourse on Peaks | A 4.75/2:79,2-4

A 4.2.3.4 Aṅguttara Nikāya 4, Catukka Nipāta 2, Duttiya Paṇṇāsaka 3, Apaṇṇaka Vagga 4

Theme: The four goals in spiritual training

1 Bhikshus, there are these 4 kinds of peaks. What are the four?

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| (1) The peak of moral virtue | <i>sīl’agga</i> |
| (2) The peak of concentration [meditation] | <i>samādh’agga</i> |
| (3) The peak of wisdom | <i>paññā’gga</i> |
| (4) The peak of liberation | <i>vimutt’agga</i> |

These, bhikshus, are the 4 kinds of peaks.

— evaṃ —

SD 40a.12(3.5b)

Agga Sutta 2

Duttiya Agga Sutta The Second Discourse on Peaks | A 4.75/2:79,5-7

A 4.2.3.5 Aṅguttara Nikāya 4, Catukka Nipāta 2, Duttiya Paṇṇāsaka 3, Apaṇṇaka Vagga 5

Theme: The four peaks in spiritual training

2 Bhikshus, there are these four kinds of peaks. What are the four?

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| (5) The peak of material form | <i>rūp’agga</i> |
| (6) The peak of feeling | <i>vedanā’gga</i> |
| (7) The peak of perception [consciousness] | <i>saññā’gga</i> |
| (8) The peak of existence | <i>bhav’agga</i> |

¹⁶⁰ See **The Buddha discovered dhyana** @ SD 33.1b (5.2).

¹⁶¹ See **Ākiñcaññ’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.7/4:267 f), SD 24.17 & (**Pañcāla,caṇḍa**) **Sambādha S** (A 9.42/4:449-451), SD 33.2. On how the sphere of nothingness can lead to awakening, see **Añeñja**, **Sappāya S** (M 106/2:261-266), SD 85.13.

¹⁶² Ee treats these 2 suttas as one, but Be Ce Se take them as two suttas (as here). Ee however reads *aṅga*, “factor,” instead of *agga*, which is the preferred reading, foll Comy (AA 3:107) which read *agga* throughout. See also S 22.76-/3:83 f; B 27*; Vbh 426,28; Miln 132, 336.

These, bhikshus, are the four kinds of peaks.

— evaṃ —

3.5.1.2 The Arahātā Sutta 1 (S 22.76) presents *bhav'agga* as the foremost of existence, that is, the apex of the 9 abodes of beings (*nava satt'āvāsa*), listed in the **Nava Satt'āvāsa Sutta** (A 9.24).¹⁶³ As used in the Abhidhamma (Vbh 426,8) and Commentaries, the “foremost existence” is the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, the highest of all the sentient worlds.¹⁶⁴ In the Arahātā Sutta 1, the Buddha says: “Bhikshus, to whatever extent there are the abodes of beings, even up to *the peak of existence*, they are the foremost, the best in the world, that is to say, the arhats.”¹⁶⁵

3.5.1.3 The Commentary, however, explains that these four peaks are the foremost (*agga*) attainments of an arhat, that is, they thoroughly understand (*sammāsati*) them (AA 3:107).¹⁶⁶ In the suttas, however, *bhav'agga* has a physical sense, referring to the peak of all existence, from the “uppermost” limit of the world (as beings or existence, *bhava*),¹⁶⁷ as opposed to the lowest limit, Avīci.¹⁶⁸ The Sutta Nipāta Commentary says that the beings in the “peak of existence” (*bhav'agga*) have consciousness as their food (*viñ-ñāṇ'āhāra, sevino*, SnA 507).

3.5.2 The arhat's peak experiences. In terms of my understanding of the suttas, “**the peak of material form**” (*rūp'agga*) not only to the arhat's thorough understanding of material form (*rūpa*), that is, matter generally, but also (if we take *form* as the first aggregate, as the human body), we can also say that he is fully disciplined and tamed in his bodily posture and actions, and his speech. In short, he would be said to be perfectly “cultivated in body” (*bhāvita, kāya*).¹⁶⁹

“**The peak of feeling**” (*vedanā'gga*) refers to the arhat's full control of his feelings, which are always wholesome, even in a hostile or negative situation. His mind is singular in the sense that he only has “thought-formation” (*citta, saṅkhāra*), without any “mental formations” (*mano, saṅkhārā*).¹⁷⁰

“**The peak of perception [consciousness]**” here refers to the arhat's consciousness. We have already noted that he has only “thought-formation” (*citta, saṅkhāra*), a singular mental process, free from mental proliferation (*papañca*).¹⁷¹

Since the arhat is fully freed from the world, while he lives, he is said to have attained “**the peak of existence**” (*bhav'agga*). His singular stream of consciousness or thought-formation persists only as long as he lives. Upon dying, there is no remains whatsoever of his body or mind: his consciousness ceases and is unestablished (*appatiṭṭhita*), that is, finds no footing for a new life.¹⁷²

¹⁶³ A 9.24/4:401 = D 33,3.2(3)/3:263. Briefly mentioned at D 3:288; A 5:53, 57; Khp 2 :: KhpA 86; Nc:Be 207; Pm 1:22, 122, 2:34.

¹⁶⁴ Miln 132, 393; J 4:182, 6:354; SnA 17, 41; KhpA 179, 240.

¹⁶⁵ S 22.76.10/3:83, SD 26.7.

¹⁶⁶ Cf **Kathā, vatthu**, where the scholium or “title summary” (*uddāna*) seems to def it as “realm of the non-conscious beings” (*asañña, satta*) (Kvu 266,28).

¹⁶⁷ On **the 3 kinds of worlds** (*loka*)—of formations, of beings, of space—see Vism 7.37/204 f; DA 1:173; MA 1:397, 2:200; also SID: loka.

¹⁶⁸ Miln 336; J 4:182, 6:354; SnA 17, 41; KhpA 179, 249; Lalv pp82, 272; Mvst 2:302, 313, 230.

¹⁶⁹ This an adj for “bodily cultivation” (*kāya, bhāvanā*), which in the **3 cultivations** (*bhāvanā*) (of the body, *kāya*~; of the mind, *citta*~; of wisdom, *paññā*~, D 1.10(48)/3:219) refers to moral virtue (restraint and purity in body and speech). There are also **the 4 cultivations** *(*kāya, bhāvanā, sīla, bhāvanā, citta, bhāvanā, paññā, bhāvanā*, S 4,111,24: *kāya, bhāvita, sīla, bhāvita, citta, bhāvita, paññā, bhāvita*), where *kāya, bhāvanā* refers to restraint of the 5 sense-doors (SA 2:395).

¹⁷⁰ See **Cūḷa, Vedalla S** (M 44.13-15/1:301) + SD 40.9 (2.4.3+2.6).

¹⁷¹ See **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18/1:108-114) + SD 6.14 (2).

¹⁷² See also **Parivīmaṃsana S** (S 12.51/2:80-84), SD 11.5. See also S:B 421 n314 where Bodhi disagrees with Harvey's view.

3.6 THE SPHERE OF NOTHINGNESS AS A PEAK

3.6.1 The Pañca-t,aya Sutta, at one point, speaks of the sphere of nothingness [§§4-5] as “**the supreme peak of perfectly pure consciousness**” (*saññānam parisuddhā paramā aggā anuttariyā*) [§4.2]. The outside meditators before the Buddha’s time and in his own time (and the outside meditators of today, we might add), when they do attain some profound level of meditation, even dhyana, do not really understand its nature. The Buddha declares that even such a high attainment is still “conditioned and gross” [§4.3; 3.4.3.4]. They are mind-made and do not lead to salvation.

3.6.2 Unable to understand such spiritual states properly, they can only describe or define such states in terms of their dogmas and views, or like many of the ancient non-Buddhist mystics, they are able to relate their profound mystical experiences to their scriptures, and are often troubled by this. Some of them even go on to start their own sect or religion. The main difficulty with such a system, even when they come close to the early Buddhist dhyana experience, is that it is still rooted in or centred around such eternalist ideas as a supreme deity or immortal soul.

3.7 THE UNCONSCIOUS BEINGS AS A PEAK

3.7.1 The non-Buddhist recluses and brahmins who are meditators or speculators, on a higher level of mystical experience, declare that “the unconscious” is “peaceful...sublime” [§6.2]. Their reasoning is something like this: if consciousness is the source of suffering and imperfection, then we would be blissful and perfect if we are rid of it. This seems to be a transcendental version of “sense-rejecting” teaching of the brahmin Pārāsariya, criticized by the Buddha in **the Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta** (M 152).

3.7.2 The brahmin youth Uttara, pupil of Pārāsariya, tells the Buddha, “Here, master Gotama, one does not see forms with the eye, one does not hear sounds with the ear. This is how, master Gotama, the brahmin Pārāsariya teaches his disciples the cultivation of the faculties (*indriya, bhāvanā*).” The Buddha retorts,

In that case, Uttara, according to what the brahmin Pārāsariya says, the blind would be one with developed faculty, the deaf would be one with developed faculty. For, Uttara, the blind sees no form with the eye, the deaf hears no sounds with the ear!” (M 152,2/3:298), SD 17.13

3.7.3 Here, we have used the translation “unconsciousness” for *asaññā* [§§6-7] in the non-Buddhist sense. Where it does occur, unconsciousness is simply the result of sleep, physical trauma or medical condition, and is not a religious or mystical state at all. In early Buddhist cosmology, we translate *asañña*, specifically in term, *asañña, satta*, as “non-conscious being” [3.2.1.4].

3.8 FORMATION IN THE FORMLESS SPHERES

3.8.1 Besides the Buddhists, other recluses and brahmins, too, criticize the notion of an “unconscious” state as the apex of religious experience as being a delusion [§9.3]. Such critics instead advocate that there must be some level of formations, here meaning some kind of “sensing,” “that this mental sphere [meditative state] occurs through a measure of formations (*sañkhāra, matta*) by way of what is seen, heard, sense or cognized” [§10.2].

3.8.2 The Buddha’s answer is that “the attaining of this mental sphere is **a disaster indeed**—for, bhikshus, it is said that this mental sphere is to be attained as an attainment with formations” [§10.2]. In fact, the non-Buddhist meditators of the Buddha’s time come quite close to the Buddha’s method, but a miss is as good as a mile.

3.8.3 “This mental sphere,” say the Buddha, “should be attained as an attainment with a residue of formations” [§10.3]. Here, “**a residue of formations**” (*sañkhārāvasesa*) means that even though all our physical sensing (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and thinking) have been transcended, there is a basic sense of feeling, especially a full awareness of mental joy. The implications of this passage are less clear in the Tibetan version, which, in addition to what is seen, heard, sensed, and cognized, also brings in such topics as morality and discipline, celibacy, and ascetic practices. In other words, it shows more technicality than spirituality, suggesting some difficulty in the transmission or translation of the text into Tibetan.

3.8.4 In simple terms, what the Buddha is saying is that, under normal circumstances—with the unawakened mind in general—we cannot really stop or suspend consciousness. Even when we are uncon-

scious or in the deepest of dhyana, there must be “a residue of formations” within us. Otherwise, we would have been dead.¹⁷³

Yet, this very same “residue of formations” is what allows us to fully experience the bliss of dhyana, where all thinking has been transcended. Only when we emerge from dhyana, does thinking and all the other senses return. Only then we are able to examine or evaluate about what we have experienced, and direct our minds to reflect on the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self of our experience itself and all states occurring around us.¹⁷⁴

3.9 THE NEITHER-CONSCIOUS-NOR-UNCONSCIOUS AS A PEAK

3.9.1 The Tibetan version qualifies the attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception as the “pinnacle [peak] of existence” (Skilling 1994: 330,11). Although the Pañca-t,taya Sutta does not make this point, **Bhaddaji S** (A 5.170) states that the attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is said to be the “peak of existence.”¹⁷⁵

3.9.2 The non-Buddhist meditators and speculators refer to this state as that of “the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious” [§§8-11]. They speculate that since both consciousness and unconsciousness are “imperfect,” the highest spiritual state must be something in between, that is, something “neither conscious nor unconscious.” This however is at best a philosophical state, not a real mental or meditative attainment, especially when they claim that such a state is “attained through what is seen, heard, sensed, and cognized” with “a measure of formations” [§10.2].¹⁷⁶

3.9.2 We have already here noted that, in early Buddhism, the true peak of existence is said to be the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. The Buddha himself has attained to this state before his awakening.¹⁷⁷ This is the name for the 4th dhyana of the formless sphere (*arūpāvacara*), a quasi-conscious state that is surpassed only by the state of complete suspension of consciousness called or the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*), attained only by the Buddha and the arhats.¹⁷⁸

3.10 “THE PEACEFUL...THE SUBLIME” [§§6.2, 9.3, 17.3, 18.3, 19.3]

3.10.1 The phrase, “this is the peaceful, the sublime” (*etaṃ santam etaṃ pañitam*) is common stock description in the suttas for the dhyanas, the attainments, but most appropriately for nirvana.¹⁷⁹ Fully stated, it goes “This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”¹⁸⁰ In the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, the

¹⁷³ This is certainly the case in the cessation of feeling and perception (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*): see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.42/1:175), SD 1.11; **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.25/1:296) + SD 30.2 (4); **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.16-21/1:301 f) + SD 40a.9 (2.5). For comy details, see Vism 23.16-52/702-709. See SID: *saññā,vedayita,nirodha*.

¹⁷⁴ On how thinking is not involved in meditation and dhyana, see (**Dasaka**) **Cetanā’karaṇīya S** (A 10.2), SD 41,6, and (**Ekā,dasaka**) **Cetanā’karaṇīya S** (A 11.2), SD 33.3b. Thinking is also not involved in the attainment of cessation: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.16-21), SD 40a.9.

¹⁷⁵ A 5.170/3:202.17), SD 95.4.

¹⁷⁶ A similar claim (although obliquely) can be found in the later, more philosophical Buddhist statements on dhyana. Deleau quotes **Samādhi,rāja Sūtra**, which “lists hundreds of qualifications and merits of ‘the *samādhi* that is manifested as the sameness of the essential nature of all *dharma*s’ (*sarva,dharma,svabhāva,samatā,vipañcita,-samādhi*), but there is no clearly identifiable meditative technique, which can be singled out as this particular *samādhi*.” (1999:73). See SD 36.12 (6.4.4).

¹⁷⁷ **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.16/1:165), SD 1.11.

¹⁷⁸ See **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.42/1:175)+n, SD 1.11.

¹⁷⁹ Here, it refers to a speculative view (*diṭṭhi*) & thinking (*kappa*): **M 102/2:230,18, 231,17, 235,18+20+ 23** (all pe), 236×2, 237. As stock referring to nirvana: **M 64/1:436,34**; **A 3.32/1:133,1, 9.36/4:423,3+21, 424,18, 425,11 pe**, 426,4 pe, **10.6/5:8,8, 10.60/110,23, 111,1, 11.7/5:319,15, 11.8/320,21, 11.9/322,15, 11.19/354,9, 11.20/355,27, 11.-21/357,1, 11.22/358,14**; **Nm 2:424**; **Miln 325**. Not ref to nirvana: **M 70.9-15/1:435-437** (4 dhyanas & first 3 attainments), **M 106/2:263,18** (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), 264,11 (*n’eva,saññā.nāsaññāyatana*), **M 152/3:299,12+24+33** (all *upekhā*), 300,3+6+9+12+15+19+2 (all *upekhā*); **It 49/2.2.12/44**; **Pm 1:159**.

¹⁸⁰ *Sabba,sankhāra,samatho sabbūpadhi,paṭinissaggo taṇhā-k,khayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan’ti*.

phrase, “This is the peaceful the sublime,” is used by non-Buddhist meditators and speculators to refer to their own perception of the highest religious state that they have experienced or they envision.¹⁸¹

3.10.2 The non-Buddhist meditators and speculators of the Buddha’s time have either experienced various deep meditative states or speculated about them. The Pañca-t,taya Sutta records them as perceiving or evaluating their various experiences—that is, the first 2 dhyanas [§17.3], the third dhyana [§18.3], the fourth dhyana [§§19.3, 20.3, 21.2, 22.3], the unconscious [§6.2], and the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious [§9.3]—as being “peaceful, sublime” (*santa pañīta*). This remark suggests that they see these respective states as a high attainment, even the summum bonum. As already noted, these are all false awakenings [2.3.3], for the simple reason that they are all mind-made, that is, “conditioned and gross” [3.11]. **The Giri-m-ānanda Sutta** (A 10.60) teaches us to see the fading away (*virāga*) and the ending (*nirodha*) of such a pleasant state.¹⁸²

3.10.3 Such states are peaceful and pleasant all right, but they are not *spiritual* states. This means that they can arouse fear (*bhaya*) and disgust (*parijegucchā*). Since they are very peaceful and pleasant states, the practitioner often become attached to them. What we are attached to, we *fear* to lose (Dh 212 f). If our desire to re-invoke such states, this very desire (which is thinking) prevents us from ever attaining them again.¹⁸³ This perceived failure often pushes us into a rut of doubt, guilt or hate (including self-hate).

3.10.4 On the other hand, if we enjoy such states, and for good reasons we are able to regularly attain them, our lack of full understanding regarding such states—especially the fact that they are mind-made, unsatisfactory, and non-self—inspires us with the notion that the world is “bad,” “evil,”¹⁸⁴ or worthless, not worth caring for, even all right to be destroyed. There is often a sense of disgust (*nibbidā*), at least, disregard for the world and for others. [3.2.4].

3.11 “CONDITIONED AND GROSS”

3.11.1 All such mystical experiences—including the form dhyanas and the formless attainments—experienced by both non-Buddhists and by Buddhists may be profoundly peaceful and pleasant (*santa pañīta*) [3.10], but they are all mind-made, and as such impermanent, and what are impermanent are unsatisfactory, and what are impermanent and unsatisfactory, are non-self, that is, they have no abiding entity.¹⁸⁵

3.11.2 In short, as refrained throughout the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, they are “conditioned and gross” (*sañkhata oḷārika*).¹⁸⁶ Here, “conditioned” (*sañkhata*) means that a dhyana only arises with the total, even if temporary, disappearance of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*), that is, sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and doubt.¹⁸⁷ In simple terms, all thinking are suspended, so that there is only left the pure mind, so to speak, pure, bright and blissfully energized.

3.11.3 By the very fact that dhyanas are conditioned, if there is even a trace of hindrance or defilement, we would not be able to attain it. Even after attaining a dhyana, we can lose it, if we lack the patience, skill, and wisdom to sustain and refine it. A dhyana in itself may be profoundly peaceful and pleasant, but it does not, in itself, bring about awakening. We need to emerge from such thought-free bliss, and direct our minds once again to seeing into true reality.¹⁸⁸ Experiencing dhyana is like polishing our high-powered telescope; cultivating wisdom is like directing it in the proper location in space to view a planet, star or nebula.

¹⁸¹ Of course, these various non-Buddhists are unlikely to use the standard phrase, but here it is a cue or shorthand used to refer to such a perception or speculation.

¹⁸² A 10.60.9+10/5:110 f @ SD 19.16. See also *Nibbidā*, SD 20.1 (3.3), on **Giri-m-ānanda S** (A 10.60).

¹⁸³ See *Bhāvanā*, SD 15.1 (14.7).

¹⁸⁴ On the difference btw “bad” and “evil,” esp in the early Buddhist context, see **Beyond good and evil**, SD 18.7 (3).

¹⁸⁵ See **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59/3:66-68), SD 1.2.

¹⁸⁶ §§4.3, 7.3, 10.4, 12.4, 15.5, 16.5, 18.6, 20.6, 22.6, 24.6.

¹⁸⁷ See *Nīvaraṇa*, SD 32.1.

¹⁸⁸ See **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.4).

3.11.4 These mystical states are said to be “**gross**” (*oḷārika*), say the Majjhima Commentary, simply because of their being conditioned as such.¹⁸⁹ As such, it is taken merely as a synonym. However, if we take “conditioned” to refer to the causes or conditions for the arising of such states, then “gross” refer to their results or benefits. A key reason they are said to be gross is that because, no matter how profound or spiritual they are, they still keep us with samsara. However, they are very helpful in calming and clearing our minds so that we are capable of gaining insight wisdom leading to awakening.

3.11.5 These states are said to be “gross” also because, if we do not fully understand them, we are likely to invoke fear and disgust within ourselves [3.10]. In other words, the Buddha regards them not as supramundane states, but as mundane ones. However, for an awakened person, or a saint on the path, such spiritual states, even mundane, properly cultivated are of great benefit in expediting his progress to awakening, since they help to keep his mind calm and clear for the sake of developing insight wisdom.

3.12 ĀYATANA. There are three important but different usages of the term *āyatana* in the Pañca-t, taya Sutta, and we shall briefly look at each of them here. When *āyatana* refers a realm or level of meditation, it is usually translated as “sphere” or “mental sphere,” to be more specific [3.12.1]. If it refers to the senses, it is rendered as “base” or “base of contact [contact-base]” to be more specific [3.12.2]. The Pañca-t, taya Sutta also uses *āyatana* in a literal sense as “base” or “position,” referring to a stand or view we make [3.12.3].

3.12.1 Āyatana as “mental sphere” [§10.2]. The first sense of *āyatana*, as used in the Pañca-t, taya Sutta, is found in §10.2 in reference to the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious state, or the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception of the Buddhists, and the highest of the formless attainments. In fact, the term “sphere” refers to any of the form dhyana and the formless attainments as states that a meditator abide in, or are reborn into.¹⁹⁰

As a psychocosmological and meditation term, appears only as “form sphere” (*rūp’āyatana*) and “formless sphere,” (*arūp’āyatana*). A related but late term, *avacara* (*ava*, “down, out” + *cara*, “wandering”) is tr as “realm,” but “sphere” is often used in the same sense.¹⁹¹ It also has a term for the sense-sphere, that is, the sense-sphere (*kāmāvacara*), the form sphere (*rūpāvacara*), and the formless sphere (*arūpāvacara*). However, if the two sets of terms are to be differentiated, the *avacara* terms should be translated as “the sense realm,” “the form realm,” and “the formless realm” respectively.

3.12.2 Āyatana as “base of contact” [§25.1]

3.12.2.1 This is a collective name for the sense-faculties (internal bases, *ajjhatt’āyatana*) and their respective sense-objects (external bases, *bahiddhāyatana*).¹⁹² They are the “bases” or “sources” on which mental processes depend, that is, the 5 physical senses or faculties (*pañc’indriya*) and consciousness, which form the 6 internal bases (*ajjh’āyatana* or *ajjhatic’āyatana*), and the 6 external objects (*bāhir’āyatana* or *bāhiddh’āyatana*), namely:

¹⁸⁹ MA 4:9

¹⁹⁰ As meditative sphere: D 2:69,21; U 80,10; as mental states: Dhs 116,12; D 2:69 f (4 dhyanas); DhsA 205,23 □ 206,16, cf 140 f; the 8 stages of mastery: V 1:4, 6×2; D 2:110,5 f, 3:260,8 f, 287, 28 f; M 2:13,15 f; S 1:136, 224; A 1:40,11, 4:305,11, 348,14, 5:61,3; Pm 1:5,11; Dhs §247; DhsA 189,19+25; state of mind (gen): Pm 1:52,23, 241,36, qu at Vism 580,14. See also SD 17.8a (5.2) & (11.2).

¹⁹¹ These are very common cpds in Abhidhamma & Comys, esp in numerous psychocosmological cpds Dhs 1, p60,3, 1260, 1265, 1281; J 6:99,7; Vism 452,30-453,22. The word *avacara* appears only in a few words in the suttas, esp as *atakkāvacara*, “not in the realm of reasoning [thinking]” (D 2:36, 37, 285; M 1:167, 487, 2:93, 172×2, 173; S 1:12, 17, 22, 24, 29, 39; A 2:189, 190; It 37; Nc:Be 198; DA 1:99; AA 3:173; UA 391; ItA 1:164. See D 14.3,1/2:36 n, SD 49.8.

¹⁹² As elements of sense-perception, with aggregates (*khandha*) and the elements (*dhātu*), factors of physical existence: D 2:305,8 = M 3:249,16 = Pm 1:37,32; M 1:50,7 = S 2:3,8; A 3:400,25 f; S 1:134,28*, 196,14*; Tha 1255; Thī 472; Nc 104,13; Vbh 79,37, 99,14, 137,15. See CPD: āyatana (2:129).

internal sense-faculties

the eye	<i>cakkhu</i>	or <i>cakkh'āyatana</i>
the ear	<i>sota</i>	or <i>sot'āyatana</i>
the nose	<i>ghāna</i>	or <i>ghān'āyatana</i>
the tongue	<i>jivhā</i>	or <i>jivhāyatana</i>
the body	<i>kāya</i>	or <i>kāy'āyatana</i>
the mind	<i>mano</i>	or <i>man'āyatana</i> ¹⁹³

external sense-objects

visual form	<i>rūpa</i>	or <i>rūp'āyatana</i>
sound	<i>sadda</i>	or <i>sadd'āyatana</i>
smell	<i>gandha</i>	or <i>gandh'āyatana</i>
taste	<i>rasa</i>	or <i>ras'āyatana</i>
touch	<i>phoṭṭhabba</i>	or <i>phoṭṭhabb'āyatana</i>
mind-objects	<i>dhamma</i>	or <i>dhamm'āyatana</i>

3.12.2.2 Here, the Buddha declares that he has fully understood “the six bases of contact’s arising, passing away, gratification, and escape,” and that he has awakened to “the liberation through non-clinging” (*anupāda vimokkha*) [§25.1]. In **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23), the Buddha declares that he teaches “the all” (*sabba*)—a theory of everything—that is, the six internal sense-faculties and their respective external sense-objects, as shown above. This is all we can know, and need to know, for spiritual liberation.¹⁹⁴

3.12.3 *Āyatana* as “position” [§13]. At the end of its section on speculations about the future, the Pañca-t,taya Sutta refers to the five related speculative views as “positions, bases or stands” (*āyatana*). This is the third sense—a philosophical one—of *āyatana* as used in the Sutta, meaning, “ground, base, source, cause, condition, occasion, case.”¹⁹⁵ As already noted, *āyatana* here is possibly cognate with the Tibetan term གནལ་པ། *gnas pa* (Skt *sthāna*, *sthita*) [1.2.2]. Such a parallel points to the possibility that at least this section of the Sutta is old, even older than the rest of it.

4 Conclusion: What is the Pañca-t,taya Sutta about?

4.1 The Pañca-t,taya Sutta is the Majjhima version of the Brahma,jāla Sutta (D 1),¹⁹⁶ in that both suttas attempt to give a comprehensive survey of wrong views and how they arise. However, if the Brahma,jāla Sutta gives a *philosophical* survey of the grounds for views, then the Pañca-t,taya Sutta is an *experiential* overview of the mystical experiences of the ancient Indian yogis of the Buddha’s time.

4.2 Although, like the Brahma,jāla Sutta, the Pañca-t,taya Sutta, too, addresses wrong views, is only a *brief* overview of the wrong views of the non-Buddhists [1.1]. Despite its brevity, the Pañca-t,taya Sutta goes further than the Brahma,jāla Sutta, and also gives the basic explanation why such views are wrong, with the emphasis on meditation. Apparently, those recluses and brahmins mentioned in the Pañca-t,taya Sutta are capable of deep meditation, and would probably include such great pre-Buddha yogis as Ālāra Kālāma¹⁹⁷ and Rāma¹⁹⁸ (and his son Uddaka Rāma,putta).¹⁹⁹ The Sutta, as such, is a feedback on where they went wrong in their meditation, or how they could have progressed more fruitfully.

4.3 The basic message of the Pañca-t,taya Sutta is that all meditative experiences, no matter how profound, peaceful or subtle, are all “conditioned and gross” [3.11]—they are mind-made, unsatisfactory and non-self—and if understood as such, true progress then follows. Such mystical experiences are conducive to inner calm and clarity, which then become the bases for insight wisdom into true reality, leading on to self-awakening.

4.4 The Pañca-t,taya Sutta is also a celebration of the Buddha’s wisdom on account of his awakening. He is the first amongst all beings in our spread of time and space to break through the false notions of anything abiding or eternal, ideas in which other religions rooted themselves in, and have to struggle with ever since. The Pañca-t,taya Sutta shows the Buddha as the only world teacher, surely the first in the most recent quadrant of the cosmic cycle, who has transcended the word and the mind that define religion,

¹⁹³ “Mind-base.” On *āyatana* as “mind-base,” see (**Āsava-k,khaya**) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36) @ SD 33,8 (2.2). On *āyatana* as “sense-base,” ie sense-faculty, see **Saḷ-āyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137/3:216-222), SD 29.5.

¹⁹⁴ S 35.23/4:15 @ SD 7.1.

¹⁹⁵ D 3:182,30; M 1:494,35 f ≈ 3:96,19, 2:233,10, 262,14; A 1:255,3.

¹⁹⁶ D 1/1:12-46 @ SD 25 [1.1].

¹⁹⁷ On Ālāra, see SD 1.11 (4.1).

¹⁹⁸ On Rāma, see SD 1.11 (4.2).

¹⁹⁹ On Uddaka, see SD 1.11 (4.2) & **Uddaka S** (S 35.103), SD 96.2.

showing that this it not only possible, but also necessary, if we are to get to the heart of spirituality and liberate ourselves.

4.5 Hence, declares the Buddha, “Having known thus, that this is the goal, the Tathagata is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that” (*atth’etan’iti iti viditvā tassa nissaraṇa, das-sāvī tathāgato tad-upātivatto*).²⁰⁰ Here, “that” refers to what has eluded all other religions and what limits human knowledge and true wisdom, and, by understanding which, we are no more fettered by *that*.²⁰¹

— — —

The Discourse on the Five and the Three

M 102

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s grove near Sāvathī.²⁰²

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, thus: “Bhikshus!”

“Bhante! (*bhadante*),” the monks replied to the Blessed One in assent.

The Blessed One said this:

Summary (*uddesa*): The 5 and the 3

2 “There are, bhikshus, some recluses and brahmins who think about **the future** [the hereafter],²⁰³ devoted to views regarding the future, who claim [declare] numerous²⁰⁴ theories [dogmas]²⁰⁵ concerning the future.²⁰⁶

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| (1) Some claim that | the self is <u>conscious</u> [percipient] ²⁰⁷ and intact [unimpaired] ²⁰⁸ after death. |
| (2) Some claim that | the self is <u>unconscious</u> and intact after death. |
| (3) Some claim that | the self is <u>neither</u> conscious nor unconscious, and is intact after death. |
| (4) Or, they claim | an existing being’s <u>annihilation</u> , destruction, non-existence (after death). ²⁰⁹ |

²⁰⁰ §§4.4, 7.4, 10.5, 12.5, 15.6, 16.6, 18.7, 20.7, 22.7, 24.7.

²⁰¹ For a study of the Buddha’s transcending of “thatness” (*tam.mayatā*), see *Atammayatā*, SD 19.13.

²⁰² All the versions—Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan—agree on this venue. The Skt version however gives only the abbreviated remark: *Śrāvāstyām nidānam*, “originating in Śrāvastī.”

²⁰³ “Future,” *aparanta* = *apara* “other” + *anta*, “end” [3.1.2]; *~ānudiṭṭhi*, “devoted to views about the future,” D 1:30,25. *Aparanta* means not only “future” (what is to come), but also the final state of things, such as the end-days (eschatological speculations), or, more generally, the hereafter or the afterlife.

²⁰⁴ “Numerous,” *aneha, vihitā* = *aneka, vidha*, “many kinds (of), various, manifold” (VA 1:158,28; DA 1:103,29, 2:643,10; A 1:279,16, 2:126,20).

²⁰⁵ “Theories [dogmas],” *adhivutti* (*adhi* + *vutti*, meaning “regarding speech; highly spoken”), “expression, saying, theory,” esp as *adhivutti.pada* (D 1:13,1 Ce Ee so; Be Se *adhimutti*~) ≈ M 2:228,14 (Be Ce Ee so; Se *adhimutti* ~); A 5:36,25. *Adhimutti* (*adhi* + *mutti*, from *adhi*, “concerning” √VAC → *ukti*, “speech,” hence Skt *adhi-mukti*) “conviction, intent, inclination” (Pm 1:123,5; Vbh 340,8; Dhs 1367). *Adhimutti*, more common in the Abhidhamma texts, the Comys & Skt version [1.2.2], hardly occurs in the suttas, except as vll with *adhivutti*, such as in **Brahma.jāla S** (D 1/1:12, 29-46 passim), SD 25, where it also should read as *adhivutti.pada*, “a theory, dogma.” See CPD: *adhi-vutti-pada* & DP: *adhivutti* → *~pada*.

²⁰⁶ *Santi bhikkhave, eke samaṇa, brāhmaṇā aparanta, kappikā aparantānudiṭṭhino aparantaṃ ārabha aneka, vihitāni adhvutti, padāni* [so Be Ce Ee; Ke Se *adhimutti, padāni*] *abhivadanti*. Glossed as *adhivacana*, “designation, metaphorical expression” (DA 104,2 = MA 4:16,15 ≈ AA 5:18,5 f). Interestingly, this section on theories regarding “the future” (*apar’anta*) apparently ends with §13. For a discussion, see Intro (2.2.1).

²⁰⁷ *Saññī*, see Intro (3.2.1).

²⁰⁸ See Intro (3.2.2).

²⁰⁹ *Sato vā pana sattassa ucchedam vināsam vibhavam paññāpentī*.

(5) Or, some claim a nirvana here and now.²¹⁰

2.2 And so,

(1) they define an existing self that is intact *after* death, or

(2) they define an existing being's *annihilation*, destruction, non-existence; or

(3) some claim a nirvana *here and now*.

2.3 Thus, these views, being three, become five, and being five become three.

This is **the summary of the 5 and the 3**.

Speculations about the future²¹¹

3 (1) SURVIVING SOUL THAT IS CONSCIOUS. Here, bhikshus, these recluses and brahmins define such a self [soul], [229] as being **conscious and intact after death**, thus:²¹²

(1) these good recluses and brahmins define *the conscious, intact after-death* self as

having form,²¹³ or

(2) these good recluses and brahmins define *the conscious, intact after-death* self as

formless,²¹⁴ or

(3) these good recluses and brahmins define *the conscious, intact after-death* self as

both having form and being formless²¹⁵ or

(4) these good recluses and brahmins define *the conscious, intact after-death* self as

neither having form nor formless,²¹⁶ or

(5) these good recluses and brahmins define *the conscious, intact after-death* self as

having unified [single] consciousness,²¹⁷ or

(6) these good recluses and brahmins define *the conscious, intact after-death* self as

having diversified consciousness,²¹⁸ or

(7) these good recluses and brahmins define *the conscious, intact after-death* self as

having limited consciousness,²¹⁹ or

²¹⁰ Skilling points out that **Pañca, traya Sūtra**, the Tibetan version of Pañca-t, taya S, lists the claims of “nirvana here and now” not under views about the future, but as a separate category (1997:493). **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), on the other hand, places the claims of “supreme nirvana here and now” among the views about the future. According to **Bodhi**, “the arrangement in the Tibetan counterpart seems to be more logical.” (M:ÑB 1307 n937).

²¹¹ These various “speculations [thoughts] about the future” (*apar’anta, kappa*) are treated in some detail in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-57. Sixteen grounds (ie 16-34) deal are those of “conscious survival” (*saññī, vāda*). Two tetrads (grounds 35-38 & 39-42) deal with “non-conscious survival” (*asaññī, vāda*); another two tetrads (grounds nos 43-46 & 47-50), with “neither-conscious-nor-non-conscious survival” (*n’eva, saññī, nāsaññīmvāda*). Seven grounds (nos 51-57) are those of annihilationism (*uccheda, vāda*). (D 1.74-92/1:30-36) + SD 25 esp Table (5.2). Interestingly, this section on theories regarding “the future” (*apar’anta*) apparently ends with §13. For a discussion, see Intro (3.1.2).

²¹² The views in this section [§3] is listed in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1) under “doctrines of annihilationism” (*uccheda, vāda*), ie grounds for wrong views nos 51-57 (D 1.84-92/1:34-36), SD 25.2.

²¹³ This is the 1st of 16 grounds for the “doctrine of conscious survival” (*saññī, vāda*), ie ground 19, given in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-34 (D 1.75-77/1:30-32), SD 25.2. On form, see Intro (3.4.1).

²¹⁴ This is the 2nd of 16 grounds for the “doctrine of conscious survival” (*saññī, vāda*), ie ground 20, given in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-34 (D 1.75-77/1:30-32), SD 25.2. On formless, see Intro (3.4.1).

²¹⁵ This is the 3rd of 16 grounds for the “doctrine of conscious survival” (*saññī, vāda*), ie ground 21, given in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-34 (D 1.75-77/1:30-32), SD 25.2. See Intro (3.4.1).

²¹⁶ This is the 4th of 16 grounds for the “doctrine of conscious survival” (*saññī, vāda*), ie ground 22, given in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-34 (D 1.75-77/1:30-32), SD 25.2. See Intro (3.4.1).

²¹⁷ This is the 9th of 16 grounds for the “doctrine of conscious survival” (*saññī, vāda*), ie ground 27, given in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-34 (D 1.75-77/1:30-32), SD 25.2. See Intro (3.4.2).

²¹⁸ This is the 10th of 16 grounds for the “doctrine of conscious survival” (*saññī, vāda*), ie ground 28, given in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-34 (D 1.75-77/1:30-32), SD 25.2. See Intro (3.4.2).

(8) these good recluses and brahmins define *the conscious, intact after-death self* as *having boundless consciousness*,²²⁰ or 3.2²²¹ (9) some amongst them who have gone beyond these, claim (to have attained) some kind of **consciousness-kasina** that is boundless and imperturbable.²²²

4 The Tathagata, bhikshus, understands this, that

- (1) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self* as *having form, or*
 (2) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self* as *formless, or*
 (3) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self* as *having form and being formless or*
 (4) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self* as *neither having form nor formless, or*
 (5) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self* as *having unified consciousness, or*
 (6) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self* as *having diversified consciousness, or*
 (7) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self* as *having limited consciousness, or*
 (8) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self* as *having boundless consciousness.*

4.2 (9) Or, some declare **the sphere of nothingness**²²³ as being *boundless and imperturbable*²²⁴—where there is nothing whatsoever of the form consciousness, or of formless consciousness, or of unified consciousness, or of diverse consciousness—*this*, it is said, is the supreme²²⁵ peak of perfectly pure consciousness.²²⁶ [230]

4.3 (All) this is something conditioned and gross.²²⁷

²¹⁹ *Paritta,saññim vā te bhonto samaṇa,brāhmaṇā saññim attānaṃ paññāpentī arogaṃ param,marañā*. This is the 11th of 16 grounds for the “doctrine of conscious survival” (*saññī,vāda*), ie ground 29, given in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-34 (D 1.75-77/1:30-32), SD 25.2. See Intro (3.4.3.1).

²²⁰ *Appamāṇa,saññim vā te bhonto samaṇa,brāhmaṇā saññim attānaṃ paññāpentī arogaṃ param,marañā*. This is the 12th of 16 grounds for the “doctrine of conscious survival” (*saññī,vāda*), ie ground 30, given in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1), forming the grounds for views nos 19-34 (D 1.75-77/1:30-32), SD 25.2. See Intro (3.4.3.2).

²²¹ This 9th statement apparently is *not* a view, but a thought (*kappa*) resulting from one’s meditation, a speculation nevertheless. As such, it is listed here besides the two preceding tetrads. See Intro (3.4.3.3).

²²² *Etam vā pan’ek’esaṃ upātivattatam viññāṇa,kasiṇam eke abhivadanti appamāṇam āneñjam*. Usually, the term “boundless” (**appamāṇa**) refers to dhyanas attained through the 4 divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*) [**Brahma,vihāra**, SD 38.5], and the “imperturbable” (**āneñja**) refers to the 4 formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*) [SD 24.11 (5)]. However, it is likely that in this Sutta, the “consciousness kasina” (*viññāṇa,kasiṇa*), retains its ancient meaning of “the sphere of infinite consciousness” (*viññāṇaṇc’āyatana*) (MA 4:18,7), in which case. Both the terms, “boundless and imperturbable” (*appamāṇam āneñjam*) refer to that sphere (*āyatana*) itself: see Intro (3.2.3). On the treatment of the speculation about the “future” here, see Intro (3.4.3).

²²³ *Ākiñcaññ’āyatana*. See **Ākiñcaññ’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.7), SD 24.17. On Ālāra Kālāma’s experience, see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 16,15.2), SD 1.11.

²²⁴ See Intro (3.4.3.4).

²²⁵ *Anuttariya = na + uttara*, “higher, superior, greater,” or *uttari*, “beyond, further.” Comy glosses “This, it is said, is supreme” as meaning “It is said to be incomparable” (*~ā akkhāyatīti asadisā kathiyyati*, MA 4:18,20); cf “the highest, the eldest” (*~n’ti uttamam jeṭṭhakam*, DA 1003,30). Cf *anuttariya*: SD 14.15 (1).

²²⁶ *Yā vā pan’etāsam saññānam parisuddhā paramā aggā anuttariyā akkhāyati. Yadi rūpa,saññānam yadi arūpa,saññānam yadi ekatta,saññānam yadi nānatta,saññānam n’atthi kiñci’ti ākiñcaññ’āyatanaṃ eke abhivadanti appamāṇam āneñjam*. See Intro (3.5.1).

²²⁷ *Tay-idam saṅkhatam oḷārikam*. See Intro (3.4.3.4).

4.4 THE TATHAGATA HAS GONE BEYOND THAT. But there is **the ending of formations**.²²⁸ Having known thus, that this is the goal, **the Tathagata** is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.²²⁹

5 (2) SURVIVING SOUL THAT IS UNCONSCIOUS. Here, bhikshus,

- (1) these good recluses and brahmins who define the conscious, intact after-death self as having form, or
- (2) these good recluses and brahmins who define the conscious, intact after-death self as formless, or
- (3) these good recluses and brahmins who define the conscious, intact after-death self as both having form and being formless, or
- (4) these good recluses and brahmins who define the conscious, intact after-death self as neither having form nor being formless.

6 Here, bhikshus, there are some who criticize those recluses and brahmins who define *the conscious self as being intact after death*.

6.2 Why is this?

Because consciousness is an illness, consciousness is a *barb*, consciousness is a *dart*; but this is the peaceful, the sublime,²³⁰ that is to say, **the unconscious [the non-conscious]**.²³¹

7 This, bhikshus, the Blessed One knows, that²³²

- (1) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self as* having form, or
- (2) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self as* formless, or
- (3) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self as* having form and being formless or
- (4) *these good recluses and brahmins define the conscious, intact after-death self as* neither having form nor formless.

7.2 However, bhikshus, were any recluse or brahmin to say thus:

‘I declare the coming and going of **consciousness**, its passing away and re-arising [death and rebirth], its increase or fullness or maturation

apart from form, apart from feeling, apart from perception, apart from formations’—this is impossible.²³³

²²⁸ *Atthi kho pana saṅkhārānaṃ nirodho*. Note the use of pl “formations” (*saṅkhārā*) here, ie, they are worldly formations, not those of a saint (which is given in the singular, *saṅkhāra*): see SD 40a.9 (2.4).

²²⁹ *Atthi kho pana saṅkhārānaṃ nirodho, atth’etan’ti itī viditvā tassa nissaraṇa, dassāvī tathāgato tad-upātivatto*. See Intro [4.3].

²³⁰ “The peaceful, the sublime,” *santam paṇītam*: Here I follow Bodhi’s tr in **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M:ÑB 64.9 2009:540,6). This tr brings out the nuance that the person here perceives this state as a high attainment, even the summum bonum, that he has attained. Bodhi’s own tr here in Pañca-t,ṭaya S is “This is peaceful, this is sublime.” See Intro (3.10).

²³¹ *Saññā, rogo, saññā, gaṇḍo, saññā, sallam etam sattaṃ etam paṇītam yad idam asaṅñān’ti*. Here, “the unconscious” refers to a non-Buddhist conception, thought out by these recluses and brahmins. The Buddha term refers to a “non-conscious being” (*asaññā, satta*) [3.2.1.4].

²³² *Tayidam bhikkhave, tathāgato abhijānāti* [so Be Ce; Ee Se *pajānāti*]. Both *abhijānāti* and *pajānāti* translate as “he knows, but each has its important nuances. **Abhijānāti** (from *abhi*, “towards, concerning” + √JÑĀ, “to know”), whose noun is *abhiññā*, “higher or direct knowledge,” referring to a direct experience of higher mind or reality, or attaining a spiritual goal, esp as the 6 knowledges (*cha-l-ābhiññā*): see **Miracles**, SD 27.5a esp (5). **Pajānāti** (from *pa* + √JÑĀ), to know or understand something, such as through meditative practice, eg *dīgham passasāmīti pajānāti*, “He know he is breathing in a long breath” (**Āṇāpāna, sati S**, M 118.18/3:82 @ SD 7.13). *Ahijānāti* is preferred here for 2 reasons: (1) a majority of MSS has this reading; (3) its sense fits the context (the Buddha’s knowledge) here better.

²³³ See Intro (3.8).

7.3 This is something *conditioned and gross*.²³⁴

7.4 But there is *the ending of formations*. [231] Having known thus, that this is the goal, *the Tathagata* is thus one who sees his salvation—he is *one who has gone beyond that*.

8 (3) SURVIVING SOUL AS BEING NEITHER CONSCIOUS NOR UNCONSCIOUS. Here, bhikshus, there are these recluses and brahmins who define the intact after-death self [soul] that is **neither conscious nor unconscious**.

- (1) These recluses and brahmins define
the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious,
intact after-death self as *having form*, or
- (2) these good recluses and brahmins define
the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious,
intact after-death self as *being formless*, or
- (3) these good recluses and brahmins who define
the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious,
intact after-death self as *both having form and being formless*.
- (4) these good recluses and brahmins who define
the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious,
intact after-death self as *neither having form nor formless*.

9 Here, bhikshus, there are some who *criticize* those recluses and brahmins who define the conscious self as being intact after death.

9.2 And there are also some who *criticize* those recluses and brahmins who define the unconscious self as being intact after death.

9.3 Why is this?

Because consciousness is an *illness*, consciousness is a *barb*, consciousness is a *dart*—the unconscious [non-consciousness] is a delusion.²³⁵ But this is the peaceful, the sublime,²³⁶ that is to say, **the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious**.²³⁷

10 This, bhikshus, the Blessed One knows,²³⁸ that

- (1) *these recluses and brahmins define*
the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious,
intact after-death self as *having form, or*
- (2) *these good recluses and brahmins define*
the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious,
intact after-death self as *being formless, or*
- (3) *these good recluses and brahmins who define*
the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious,
intact after-death self as *both having form and being formless*.
- (4) *these good recluses and brahmins who define*

²³⁴ See §4.3 n.

²³⁵ *Asaññā sammoho*.

²³⁶ See Intro (3.10).

²³⁷ *N'eva, saññā, nāsaññām*. The Buddhist term for this is “the neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient consciousness.” The Sutta rejects the notion that the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception can be attained through what is seen, heard, sensed, and cognized, as this sphere can only be attained with *a mere residue of formations* [§10.3]. The implications of this passage are less clear in the Tib version, which in addition to what is seen, heard, sensed, and cognized, also brings in such topics as morality and discipline, celibacy, and ascetic practices. The Tib version qualifies the attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception as the “pinnacle of existence” (Skilling 1994:330,11). Although the Pañca-t.taya Sutta does not make this point, **Bhaddaji S** (A 5.170) states that the attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is said to be the pinnacle of existence (A 5.170/3:202.17), SD 95.4.

²³⁸ On “knows,” see §7.1 n.

*the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious,
intact after-death self as*

neither having form nor formless.

10.2 Some recluses or brahmins declare that this mental sphere [meditative state] occurs with a measure of formations by way of what is seen, heard, sense or cognized.²³⁹

Bhikshus, the attaining of this mental sphere is a disaster indeed—[232] for, bhikshus, it is said that this mental sphere²⁴⁰ is to be attained as *an attainment with formations*.²⁴¹

10.3 This mental sphere, it is said, bhikshus, should be attained as an attainment with a residue of formations.²⁴²

10.4 *This is something conditioned and gross*.²⁴³

10.5 *But there is the ending of formations*. Having known thus, that this is the goal, **the Tathagata** is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.

11 (4) THE SOUL IS ANNIHILATED. Here, bhikshus, there are these recluses and brahmins who define an existing being's **annihilation, destruction, non-existence (after death)**.²⁴⁴

11.2 (1) Here, bhikshus, there are some recluses and brahmins who *criticize* those who define the conscious self as being intact after death.

11.3 (2) There are also some good recluses and brahmins who *criticize* those who define the unconscious self as being intact after death.

11.4 (3) And there are also some good recluses and brahmins who *criticize* those who define the neither-conscious-nor-unconscious self as being intact after death.²⁴⁵

11.5 Why is this?

PARABLE OF THE TRADER: THE CRITICS. Because all these good recluses and brahmins²⁴⁶ are proclaiming their attachment to the flowing-on into a new life, thus:²⁴⁷

‘After death, we will be thus! After death we will be thus!’²⁴⁸

11.6 Just like **a trader**, when trading, goes ‘By this, that will be mine! With this I will get that!’²⁴⁹ even so, these good recluses and brahmins²⁵⁰ are clearly just like traders when they think,

‘After death, we will be thus! After death, we will be thus!’²⁵¹

12 THE PARABLE OF THE LEASHED DOG: THE ANNIHILATIONISTS. *This, bhikshus, the Blessed One knows, that*²⁵²

²³⁹ *Ye hi keci bhikkhave, samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā diṭṭha, suta, muta, viññātabbassa saṅkhāra, mattena* etassa āyatanaṃ upasampadam paññāpentī. *Ce Diṭṭha, suta, muta viññātabba, saṅkhāra, mattena, See Diṭṭha muta suta viññāta, SD 53.5.*

²⁴⁰ *Āyatana, see (3.12).*

²⁴¹ *Vyasanam h'etaṃ bhikkhave, akkhāyati etassa āyatanaṃ upasampadāya, na h'etaṃ bhikkhave, āyatanaṃ sa, saṅkhāra, samāpatti* pattabbam akkhāyati. *Be saṅkhāra, samāpatti. See (3.8).*

²⁴² *Saṅkhār'āvasesa [Be saṅkhāra, samāpatti] samāpatti, pattabbam etaṃ bhikkhave āyatanaṃ akkhāyati. Meaning, this sphere can only be attained “with a mere residue of formations”:* see Analayo 2011:594. On “a residue of formations,” see (3.8.3).

²⁴³ On “conditioned and gross,” see (3.8.3).

²⁴⁴ *Tatra bhikkhave, ye te samaṇa, brāhmaṇā sato sattassa ucchedam vināsam vibhavam paññāpentī.*

²⁴⁵ *Ye'pi te bhonto samaṇa, brāhmaṇā n'eva, saññim nāsaññim attānam [Be n'eva, saññī, nāsaññim attānam] paññāpentī arogaṃ param, maraṇā, tesameke paṭikkosanti.*

²⁴⁶ *Ie, the critics of the annihilationists.*

²⁴⁷ *Sabbe'pi me bhonto samaṇa, brāhmaṇā uddham, sarā [Ce Ee]* āsattim yeva abhivadanti. *Be uddham saram; Se uddham parāmasam. On uddham, sarā, see (3.2.4.1).*

²⁴⁸ *Comy: A kshatriya or a brahmin (MA 4:21). This, of course, need not be the only choices, as they could also wish for some heavenly rebirth, etc.*

²⁴⁹ *Seyyathā'pi nāma vāñijassa vāñijāya gacchato evam hoti: ito me idaṃ bhavissati, iminā idaṃ lacchāmī'ti. See Intro (3.2.4.2).*

²⁵⁰ *Ie, the critics of the annihilationists.*

²⁵¹ *Evam eva ime* bhonto samaṇa, brāhmaṇā vāñijūpamā maññe paṭibhanti iti pecca bhavissāma, iti pecca bhavissāmīti. *Be evam ev'ime. Se evam eva kho'me.*

these good recluses and brahmins who define an existing being's annihilation, destruction, non-existence (after death)—

12.2 they do so out of fear for their **self-identity**, out of disgust at their self-identity, and they keep running around and circling around this same self-identity.²⁵³

12.3 Just as **a dog**, tied with a leather leash to a strong post or pillar, [233] keeps running around and circling around that very same post or pillar,²⁵⁴

even so, these good recluses and brahmins, out of fear for their self-identity, out of disgust at their self-identity, keep running around and circling around this same self-identity.

12.4 *This is something conditioned and gross.*²⁵⁵

12.5 *But there is the ending of formations. Having known thus, that this is the goal, **the Tathagata** is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.*

13 Now, bhikshus, those recluses and brahmins who think about the future, devoted to views regarding the future, who claim [declare] numerous theories [dogmas] concerning the future²⁵⁶— they all claim these 5 positions [bases]²⁵⁷ or one of them.²⁵⁸

Speculations about the past

14 THE 16 THESES.²⁵⁹ There are, bhikshus, some recluses and brahmins who think about **the past**,²⁶⁰ devoted to views regarding the past, who claim [declare] numerous²⁶¹ theories [dogmas]²⁶² concerning the past.²⁶³

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) ‘The self and the world are <u>eternal</u> ,’ ²⁶⁴ | only this is true, all else empty, they claim. |
| (2) ‘The self and the world are <u>not eternal</u> ,’ | only this is true, all else empty, they claim. |
| (3) ‘The self and the world are <u>both eternal and not eternal</u> ,’ | only this is true, all else empty, they claim. |
| (4) ‘The self and the world are <u>neither eternal nor not eternal</u> ,’ | only this is true, all else empty, they claim. |
| (5) ‘The self and the world are <u>finite</u> ,’ | only this is true, all else empty, they claim. |
| (6) ‘The self and the world are <u>infinite</u> | only this is true, all else empty, they claim. |
| (7) ‘The self and the world are <u>both finite and infinite</u> ,’ | only this is true, all else empty, they claim. |
| (8) ‘The self and the world are | |

²⁵² On “knows,” see §7.1 n.

²⁵³ *Te sakkāya, bhayā sakkāya, parijegucchā sakkāyañ, ñeva anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti.* See Intro (3.2.4.3).

²⁵⁴ *Seyyathā’pi nāma sā gaddula, baddho [Se gaddula, bandho] daḥhe thambhe vā khīle vā upanibaddho [Se upanibandho] tam eva [Ce tam’eva wr] thambham vā khīlam vā anuparidhāvati anuparivattati.*

²⁵⁵ See §4.3 n.

²⁵⁶ Interestingly, this section on speculations regarding “the future” (*apar’anta*), which begins with §2.1, apparently ends here [§13]: this is confirmed by the foll line. For a discussion, see Intro (2.1).

²⁵⁷ “5 bases.” *pañc’āyatanāni*: on the connection of this with the alt title, see n in the main title header at the very start. Note that the 5th view—that of nirvana here and now—is not mentioned here; but see [§§17-24]. On *āyatana*, see (3.12.3).

²⁵⁸ *Sabbe te imān’eva pañc’āyatanāni abhivadanti etesaṃ vā aññataram.* This line clearly closes the section on the theories regarding “the future” (*apar’anta*), which begins with §2.1: see Intro (3.1).

²⁵⁹ These are an extension of the better known 10 theses: see SD 40a.10 (5+6).

²⁶⁰ “Past,” *pubb’anta* = *pubba*, “before, earlier” + *anta*, “end” [3.1]; *~ānudiṭṭhi*, “devoted to views about the past” (D 1:30,25). *Pubb’anta* means not only “past” (what is gone), but also something that has just happened, like what we have said *first* before saying something else.

²⁶¹ “Numerous,” *aneha, vihita*: see §2.1 n.

²⁶² “Theories [dogmas],” *adhivutti*: see §2.1 n.

²⁶³ For a comparative table showing these 16 views and the 10 theses, see SD 40a.14 (2.1).

²⁶⁴ The first 4 theories here also form the first 4 “undetermined” theses (*avyākata*), explained in detail in **Unanswered questions**, SD 40a.10 (5).

- neither finite nor infinite,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (9) ‘The self and the world are of a unified [single] conscious self [soul].’²⁶⁵ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (10) ‘The self and the world are of diverse conscious selves [souls].’²⁶⁶ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (11) ‘The self and the world are of limited consciousness.’²⁶⁷ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (12) ‘The self and the world are of boundless consciousness.’²⁶⁸ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (13) ‘The self and the world experiences only joy.’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (14) ‘The self and the world experiences only pain.’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (15) ‘The self and the world experiences both joy and pain,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (16) ‘The self and the world experiences neither joy nor pain,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.

15 (1) Here, bhikshus, as regards those recluses and brahmins who hold such a doctrine, such a view: ‘The self and the world are eternal’: only this is true, all else is false,’ they claim,

15.2 indeed,²⁶⁹

apart from faith,

apart from personal preference,

apart from repeated hearing,

apart from reasoned thought [specious reasoning], and

apart from being convinced of a view after pondering over it [conviction to a view after thinking it].

aññatr’eva saddhāya

aññatra ruciyā

aññatra anussavā

aññatra ākāra,parivittakkā

aññatra diṭṭhi,nijjhāna-k,khantiyā

15.3 That such a knowledge will be pure and clear **personal knowledge**—[234] this is impossible.²⁷⁰

15.4 Since they have no pure and clear personal knowledge, even the mere partial knowledge that these good recluses and brahmins clarify (regarding their view) is said to be **clinging** (*upādāna*) on their part.²⁷¹

15.5 *This is something conditioned and gross.*²⁷²

15.6 *But there is the ending of formations. Having known thus, that this is the goal, the Tathagata is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.*

16 Here, bhikshus, as regards those recluses and brahmins who hold such a doctrine, such a view:

(2) ‘The self and the world are *not* eternal,’

only this is true, all else empty, they claim.

²⁶⁵ *Ek’atta,saññī attā ca loko ca*. Here, **ekatta** clearly is *eka* (“one”)+ *attā* (“self, soul”), as in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1.-76/1:31), SD 25.2 [3.4.2], rather than the abstract *ekattā*, “oneness, unity,” such as in **Lok’āyatika S** (12.48/2:77 @ SD 17.15; or *ekattā* as referring to “equanimity,” ie the 4th dhyana, as in **Potaliya S** (M 54.15/1:364), SD 43.8. On the methods of *ekattā*, “unity,” and *nanattā*, “diversity,” see **Brahmā,jāla S** (D 1) @ SD 25.1 (49.1), **Saññā Nānatta S** (S 14.7/2:143 f) @ SD 17.5 (3) & **Abhijāna S** (S 22.24) @ SD 17.1b (2). On a possible connection with Upanishadic ideas, see **Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (4.3). See Intro (3.4.2).

²⁶⁶ *Nān’atta,saññī attā ca loko ca*. On *ek’attā*, see prec n.

²⁶⁷ *Paritta,saññī attā ca loko ca*. See Intro (3.4.3.1).

²⁶⁸ *Appamāṇa,saññī attā ca loko ca*. See Intro (3.4.3.2).

²⁶⁹ On these 5 grounds for views, see **Caṅkī S** (M 95,14/2:170 f), SD 21.15. See Intro (1.3.1; 2.3.5).

²⁷⁰ *Paccattam yeva ñāṇam bhavissati parisuddham pariyodātanti n’etaṃ thānam vijjati*, meaning that they can only uphold this claim on some ground other than direct knowledge, ie, only as a belief or as reasoning. In any case, according to **Caṅkī S** (M 95,14/2:170 f), it may still turn out to be either true or false.

²⁷¹ *Paccattam kho pana bhikkhave, ñāṇe asati parisuddhe pariyodāte, yad api te bhonto samaṇa,brāhmaṇā tattha ñāṇa,bhāga,mattam eva pariyodapenti, tad api tesam bhavataṃ samaṇa,brāhmaṇānam upādānam akkhāyati*. Comy: This is not really knowledge but wrong understanding; thus, it is declared to be clinging to views. MA 4:25.

²⁷² See §4.3 n.

- (3) ‘The self and the world are *both* eternal and not eternal,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (4) ‘The self and the world are *neither* eternal nor not eternal,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (5) ‘The self and the world are *finite*,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (6) ‘The self and the world are *infinite*’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (7) ‘The self and the world are *both* finite and infinite,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (8) ‘The self and the world are *neither* finite nor infinite,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (9) ‘The self and the world are of a *unified [single]* conscious self [soul].’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (10) ‘The self and the world are of *diverse* conscious selves [souls].’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (11) ‘The self and the world are of *limited* consciousness,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (12) ‘The self and the world are of *boundless* consciousness,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (13) ‘The self and the world experience only *joy*,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (14) ‘The self and the world experience only *pain*,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (15) ‘The self and the world experience *both* joy and pain,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.
- (16) ‘The self and the world experience *neither* joy nor pain,’ only this is true, all else empty, they claim.

16.2 *Indeed,**apart from faith,**apart from personal preference,**apart from repeated hearing,**reasoned thought [specious reasoning], and**being convinced of a view after pondering over it [conviction to a view after thinking it].*16.3 *That such a knowledge will be pure and clear personal knowledge—this is impossible. [235]*16.4 *Since they have no pure and clear personal knowledge, even the mere partial knowledge that these good recluses and brahmins clarify (regarding their view) is said to be clinging (*upādāna*) on their part.*16.5 *This is something conditioned and gross.²⁷³*16.6 *But there is the ending of formations. Having known thus, that this is the goal, **the Tathagata** is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.***Thoughts on nirvana here and now****(5) NIRVANA HERE AND NOW²⁷⁴**17 (1) FAILURE TO MASTER THE FIRST TWO DHYANAS. Here, bhikkhus, a certain recluse or brahmin, having given up altogether the devotion to views regarding *the past* and given up the devotion to views regarding *the future*,²⁷⁵²⁷³ See §4.3 n.²⁷⁴ The tetrad of the “doctrine of nirvana here and now” (*diṭṭha.dhamma,nibbāna,vāda*) are treated in **Brahma,jāla S (D 1)**, as the grounds for wrong view nos 58-62 (D 1,93-100/1:36-39) + SD 25 esp Table (5.2). Ground no 58, the view that “the self enjoys sense-pleasures” is inherent in each of the speculations here [§§17.2, 19,2, 21,2], and grounds 59+60 have been conflated as the 1st speculation here [§§17-18].²⁷⁵ *Idha bhikkhave, ekacco samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā **pubb’antānudiṭṭhinaṅ ca paṇinissaggā apar’antānudiṭṭhinaṅ ca paṇinissaggā sabbaso.***

17.2 (but) *without* any resolve regarding **the fetters of sensuality**, attains to **zest** (*pīti*) **born of mental solitude** and abides in it.²⁷⁶

17.3 He thinks thus:²⁷⁷ ‘This is peaceful! This is sublime!’²⁷⁸ That is to say, this **zest** *born of mental solitude* that I’ve attained and abide in.’

17.4 Then, that *zest* born of mental solitude ends for him.

With the ending of *zest* born of mental solitude, **grief** [mental pain] arises in him.²⁷⁹

17.5 When *grief* ends, *zest* born of mental solitude arises (again).

17.6 PARABLE OF SHADE AND LIGHT (1). Bhikshus, just as where shade vanishes, sunlight pervades, and where sunlight vanishes, shade pervades,

even so, bhikshus, *when that zest born of mental solitude ends (for him), grief [mental pain] arises, and when the grief ends, zest born of mental solitude arises.*²⁸⁰

18 This, bhikshus, **the Tathagata** knows,²⁸¹ that

this good recluse or brahmin, having given up altogether the devotion to views regarding the past and given up the devotion to views regarding the future,²⁸²

18.2 (but) *without* any resolve regarding the fetters of sensuality, attains to **zest** born of mental solitude and abides in it.

18.3 He thinks thus: ‘This is peaceful! This is sublime! That is to say, this *zest* born of mental solitude that I’ve attained and abide in.’

18.4 Then, that *zest* born of mental solitude ends for him. With the ending of *zest* born of mental solitude, **grief** [mental pain] arises in him.

18.5 When the grief ends, *zest* born of mental solitude *arises* (again).

18.6 This is something **conditioned and gross**.²⁸³

18.7 But there is the ending of formations. Having known thus, that this is the goal, **the Tathagata** is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.

19 (2) FAILURE TO MASTER THE THIRD DHYANA. Here, bhikshus, a certain recluse or brahmin, having given up altogether the devotion to views regarding *the past* and given up the devotion to views regarding *the future*,

19.2 (but) *without* any resolve regarding the fetters of sensuality,

having transcended *zest* born of mental solitude,

attains to **spiritual joy** (*sukha*) and abides in it.²⁸⁴

19.3 He thinks thus: ‘This is peaceful! This is sublime!’²⁸⁵ That is to say, this **spiritual joy** that I’ve attained and abide in.’

19.4 Then, that *spiritual joy* ends for him. With the ending of *spiritual joy*, *zest* born of mental solitude arises (in him).²⁸⁶

19.5 When *zest* born of mental solitude ends, *spiritual joy* [236] arises (again).

²⁷⁶ *Kāma,saññojanānaṃ anadhiṭṭhānā pavivekaṃ pītiṃ upasampajja viharati*. See Intro (2.3.2).

²⁷⁷ Here, the inherent (but omitted) verb has supplied: “he thinks,” *kappeti* or *cinteti*.

²⁷⁸ See Intro (3.10).

²⁷⁹ *Tassa sā pavivekā pīti nirujjhati, pavivekāya pītiyā nirodhā uppajjati domanassaṃ*. On *domanassa* here, see Intro (2.3.2) n.

²⁸⁰ *Evam eva kho bhikkhave, pavivekāya pītiyā nirodhā uppajjati domanassaṃ, domanassassa nirodhā uppajjati pavivekā pīti*.

²⁸¹ On “knows,” see §7.1 n.

²⁸² *Idha bhikkhave, ekacco samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā pubb’antānudiṭṭhinaṃ ca paṭinissaggā apar’antānudiṭṭhinaṃ ca paṭinissaggā sabbaso*.

²⁸³ See §4.3 n.

²⁸⁴ §19.2: *Kāma,saññojanānaṃ anadhiṭṭhānā pavivekāya pītiyā samatikkamā nirāmisam sukham upasampajja viharati*. See Intro (2.3.2).

²⁸⁵ See Intro (3.10).

²⁸⁶ *Nirāmisassa sukhasa nirodhā uppajjati pavivekā pīti*, ie, he falls back to the 1st dhyana.

19.6 PARABLE OF SHADE AND LIGHT (2). *Bhikshus, just as where shade vanishes, sunlight pervades, and where sunlight vanishes, shade pervades, even so, bhikshus, when that spiritual joy ends (for him), zest born of mental solitude arises, and when zest born of mental solitude ends, the spiritual joy arises.*²⁸⁷

20 This, *bhikshus, the Tathagata knows,*²⁸⁸ *that this good recluse or brahmin, having given up altogether the devotion to views regarding the past and given up the devotion to views regarding the future,*

20.2 (but) *without any resolve regarding the fetters of sensuality, (and) having transcended zest born of mental solitude, attains to spiritual joy and abides in it.*

20.3 He thinks thus: ‘This is peaceful! This is sublime! That is to say, this spiritual joy that I’ve attained and abide in.’

20.4 Then that spiritual joy ends for him. With the ending of the spiritual joy, the solitude that is zest arises in him.

20.5 When zest born of mental solitude ends, the spiritual joy arises.

20.6 This is something conditioned and gross.²⁸⁹

20.7 But there is the ending of formations. Having known thus, that this is the goal, **the Tathagata** is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.

21 (3) FAILURE TO MASTER THE FOURTH DHYANA. Now, bhikshus, here a certain recluse or brahmin, having given up altogether the devotion to views regarding *the past* and given up the devotion to views regarding *the future,*

21.2 (but) *without any resolve regarding the fetters of sensuality,*

having transcended *zest born of mental solitude,*

(and) having transcended *spiritual joy,*

attains **neutral feeling** [neither painful nor pleasant feeling] and abides in it.²⁹⁰

21.3 He thinks thus: ‘This is peaceful! This is sublime!’²⁹¹ That is to say, this neutral feeling [neither painful nor pleasant feeling] that I’ve attained and abide in.’

21.4 Then that *neutral feeling* ends for him. With the ending of the neutral feeling, the spiritual joy arises.²⁹²

21.5 When the *spiritual joy* ends, *neutral feeling* arises.

21.6 PARABLE OF SHADE AND LIGHT (3). *Bhikshus, just as where shade vanishes, sunlight pervades, and where sunlight vanishes, shade pervades,*

even so, bhikshus, when that neutral feeling ends (for him), the spiritual joy arises, and when the spiritual joy ends, neutral feeling arises.²⁹³

22 This, *bhikshus, the Tathagata knows,*²⁹⁴ *that*

that this good recluse or brahmin, having given up altogether the devotion to views regarding the past and given up the devotion to views regarding the future,

22.2 (but) without any resolve regarding the fetters of sensuality,

having transcended *zest born of mental solitude,*

(and) having transcended *spiritual joy,*

²⁸⁷ *Evam eva kho bhikkhave, nirāmisassa sukhassa nirodhā uppajjati pavivekā pīti, pavivekāya pītiyā nirodhā uppajjati nirāmisam sukham.*

²⁸⁸ On “knows,” see §7.1 n.

²⁸⁹ See §4.3 n.

²⁹⁰ §21.2: *Kāma,saññojanānam anadhiṭṭhānā pavivekāya pītiyā samatikkamā nirāmisam sukhassa samatikkamā adukkham-asukham vedanam upasampajja viharati.* See Intro (2.3.2).

²⁹¹ See Intro (3.10).

²⁹² *Nirāmisassa sukhassa nirodhā uppajjati pavivekā pīti,* ie, he falls back to the 1st dhyana.

²⁹³ *Evam eva kho bhikkhave, nirāmisassa sukhassa nirodhā uppajjati pavivekā pīti, pavivekāya pītiyā nirodhā uppajjati nirāmisam sukham.*

²⁹⁴ On “knows,” see §7.1 n.

attains neutral feeling and abides in it.

22.3 *He thinks thus: ‘This is peaceful! This is sublime! That is to say, [237] this neutral feeling that I’ve attained and abide in.’*

22.4 *Then that neutral feeling ends for him. With the ending of the neutral feeling, the spiritual joy arises.*

22.5 *When the spiritual joy ends, neutral feeling arises.*

22.6 *This is something conditioned and gross.*²⁹⁵

22.7 *But there is the ending of formations. Having known thus, that this is the goal, **the Tathagata** is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.*

23 (4) MISPERCEPTION OF NIRVANA. But here, bhikshus, a certain recluse or brahmin, having given up altogether the devotion to views regarding *the past* and given up the devotion to views regarding *the future*,

23.2 (but) *without any resolve regarding the fetters of sensuality, having transcended zest born of mental solitude, having transcended *spiritual joy*, (and) having transcended *neutral feeling*,*

23.3 *regards thus: ‘I’ve attained **peace!** I’m cooled [attained nirvana]! I’m without clinging!’*²⁹⁶

24 *This, bhikshus, **the Tathagata** knows,*²⁹⁷ *that that this good recluse or brahmin, having given up altogether the devotion to views regarding the past and given up the devotion to views regarding the future,*

24.2 (but) *without any resolve regarding the fetters of sensuality, having transcended zest born of mental solitude, having transcended *spiritual joy*, (and) transcended *neutral feeling*,*

24.3 *regards thus: ‘I’ve attained **peace!** I’m cooled [attained nirvana]! I’m without clinging!’*

24.4 *Yet, this venerable one proclaims this very way to be conducive to nirvana.*²⁹⁸

24.5 *But this good recluse or brahmin*

(1) still clings , clinging to ²⁹⁹	a view about the past,	<i>pubb,antânudiṭṭhi</i>
(2) or, still clings , clinging to	a view about the future,	<i>apar,antânudiṭṭhi</i>
(3) or, still clings , clinging to	the fetters of sense-pleasure,	<i>kāma,saññojanā</i>
(4) or, still clings , clinging to	zest born of mental solitude,	<i>paviveka pīti</i>
(5) or, still clings , clinging to	spiritual joy,	<i>nirāmisa sukha</i>
(6) or, still clings , clinging to	neutral feeling.	<i>adukkham-asukha vedanā</i>

24.6 *And this venerable one regards thus:*

*‘I’ve attained **peace!** I’m cooled [attained nirvana]! I’m without clinging!’—this, too, is said to be a clinging on the part of the good recluse or brahmin.*

24.7 *This is something conditioned and gross.*³⁰⁰

24.8 *But there is the ending of formations. Having known thus, that this is the goal, **the Tathagata** is thus one who sees his salvation—he is one who has gone beyond that.*

²⁹⁵ See §4.3 n.

²⁹⁶ *Santo ’ham-asmi nibbuto ’ham-asmi anupādāno ’ham-asmi’ ti samanupassati.* On *samanupassati*, see Intro (3.3.2).

²⁹⁷ On “knows,” see §7.1 n.

²⁹⁸ *Addhā ayam āyasmā nibbāna,sappāyañ,ñeva paṭipadam abhivadati.*

²⁹⁹ *Upādiyamāno upādiyati.*

³⁰⁰ See §4.3 n.

The Buddha's liberation

25 But, bhikkhus, **this noble state of supreme peace** has been awakened to [been discovered] by the Tathagata, [238]

that is to say, having understood, as they really are, the arising, passing away, gratification, and escape regarding the 6 bases of contacts,³⁰¹ he has awakened to the liberation through non-clinging.³⁰²

26 The Blessed One said this. The monks joyfully approved of the Buddha's word.

— evaṃ —

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³⁰¹ Ie, the experiences of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. On *āyatana*, see (3.12.2).

³⁰² §25.1: *Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave, tathāgatena anuttaraṃ santi, vara, padaṃ* [Se *santaṃ vara, padaṃ*] *abhisambuddhaṃ yad-idaṃ channaṃ phassa'āyatanānaṃ samudayaṃ ca atth'aṅgamaṃ ca assādaṃ ca ādīnavaṃ ca nissaraṇaṃ ca yathā, bhūtaṃ viditvā anupādā vimokkha'ti*. On the bases of contact, see Intro (3.12.2).

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Appendix: Speculations about the future (**Brahma,jāla Sutta**, D 1,75-77/1:30-32 @ SD 25.2)³⁰³

VI Immortality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Conscious survival</u> [D 1.75-77] They proclaim that the self [soul], after death, does not decay, is <u>conscious</u> and:	19 has form	27 of unified consciousness
	20 formless	28 of diversified consciousness
	21 both has form and is formless	29 of limited consciousness
	22 neither has form nor is formless	30 on boundless consciousness
	23 finite	31 undividedly happy
	24 infinite	32 undividedly suffering
	25 is both finite and infinite	33 both happy and suffering
	26 is neither finite nor infinite	34 neither happy nor suffering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Non-conscious survival</u> [§§78-80] They proclaim that the self [soul], after death, does not decay, is <u>non-conscious</u> and:	35 has form	39 finite
	36 formless	40 infinite
	37 both has form and is formless	41 both finite and infinite
	38 neither has form nor is formless	42 neither finite nor infinite
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Neither conscious nor non-conscious survival</u> [D 1:81-83] They proclaim that the self [soul], after death, does not decay, is <u>neither conscious nor non-conscious</u> and:	43 has form	47 finite
	44 formless	48 infinite
	45 both has form and is formless	49 both finite and infinite
	46 neither has form nor is formless	50 neither finite nor infinite
VII Annihilationism [D 1.84-92] One holds this view: Another says that while he does not deny that such a self (51) exists, but it is not completely annihilated. For there is another self that is	51 The self has physical form, composed of the four great elements, born of mother and father	The self is completely annihilated at death.
	52 divine, having physical form, of the sense-sphere, partaking of solid food.	It is <i>this</i> self that is completely annihilated at death.
	53 divine, having physical form, mind-made, complete with limbs, organs, and senses.	
	54 of the sphere of infinite space.	
	55 of the sphere of infinite consciousness.	
	56 of the sphere of nothingness.	
57 of the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception.		
VIII Nirvana here and now [D 1.93-99] One holds this view: Another says that while he does not deny that such a self (51) exists, but it is not completely annihilated. For there is	58 When this self enjoys <u>the pleasures of its senses</u> ,	To that extent, it has attained to supreme nirvana here and now.
	59 another self dwelling in <u>the 1st dhyana</u> .	
	60 another self dwelling in <u>the 2nd dhyana</u> .	
	61 another self dwelling in <u>the 3rd dhyana</u> .	
	62 another self dwelling in <u>the 4th dhyana</u> .	

³⁰³ Source: **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1), SD 25.1, Table (5.2).

